

NME

PJ HARVEY

NEW ALBUM SESSIONS
IN DEPTH REPORT

20 YEARS GONE

RICHEY EDWARDS

CELEBRATING
A MANIC
LIFE

RARE PHOTOS

EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW
WITH HIS
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THE STROKES

STUDIO SECRETS FROM
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NOEL

AMORPHOUS
ANDROGYNOUS
HIT BACK

CARL BARÂT

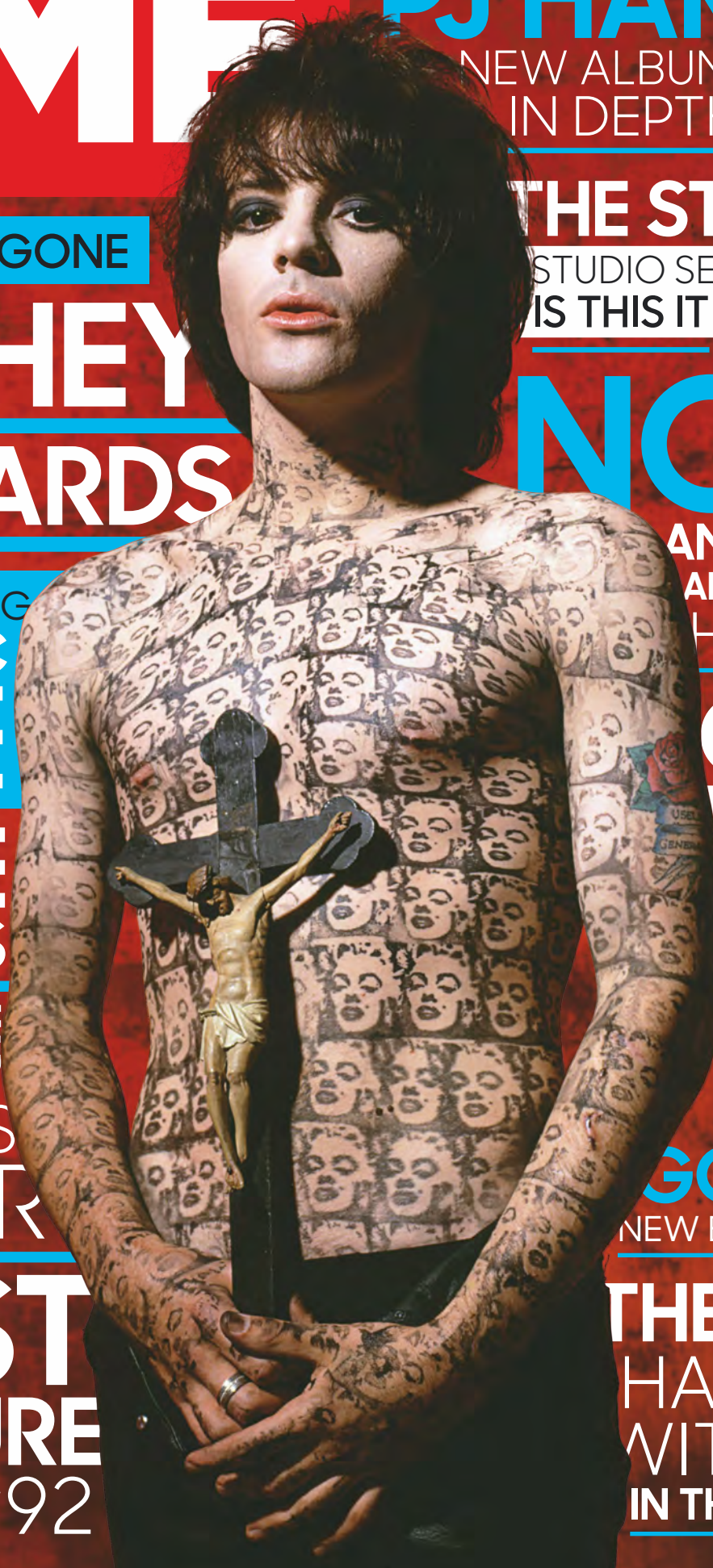
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LIBS SONGS
REVEALED

KIM GORDON

NEW BOOK VERDICT

THE CRIBS

HANGING
WITH PIGS
IN THE BAHAMAS



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original
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vodka

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

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GIVE MUMFORDS A CHANCE

Fair play to Reading And Leeds Festivals for booking Mumford & Sons to play this year. Since Zane Lowe announced that they'd be joining Metallica as headliners, a load of my friends have been banging on about them not being rock enough and suggesting that The Libertines or the Foo Fighters should have been announced instead (which could still happen, let's not forget, as there's one headline slot left). But these days, a predominantly 'rock' bill isn't what Reading And Leeds is about – it's about variety. If Glastonbury can have Metallica as headliners, then Reading And Leeds can sure as hell have Mumford & Sons. Why not? They're not my favourite band, but I'd defend their right to play the festival to the hilt.

Jack Mallinson, via email

Al Horner: Too right, Aaron. Reading And Leeds have done amazing things with their bills in recent years, so if Mumfords' brand of drowsy, gentle folk isn't your (or anyone else's) thing, then simply hop on over to any of the other tents. Someone amazing is bound to be playing at



the same time. There's also something positive to be said about a young-ish British band getting the nod. Biffy nailed it at Reading And Leeds in 2013. Foals nailed it at Latitude that same year. And Marcus and co already proved themselves capable of bringing a ruckus on Glastonbury's Pyramid Stage. It's a good booking. Bring on the banjos.

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clamping down on any and every songwriting similarity is gonna leave the world of music a grey, lifeless place.

Megan Honchar, via email

AH: I'm with you, Megan. "Musical accidents" – as Petty called them in a statement – are part of pop's DNA. Artists need time to grow into their own sound. If Radiohead had been brought to reckoning for sounding a lot like Jeff Buckley, would they have blossomed into the influential band they later became? No chance.

EEZ-EH RIDERS

How cool is it that Kasabian are playing at the Baftas? I'm hoping their set will involve some sort of guessing game where they recreate classic film plots as 'Eez-Eh' lyrics. Here's a go at *Star Wars*: "Lukey's kissing his sister/ His best mate's a pedal bin geezer/Him and R2 blowing up the Death Star/Got nuff force skills to impress ya!"

Paul Thompson, via email

AH: We all spend our spare time in different ways, Paul. Good luck to you.

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Twenty years since the disappearance of Richey Edwards and still no answers for his friends and family. It's great that his Manic Street Preachers bandmates have done a 'Holy Bible' anniversary tour, remembering his best work and introducing it to a new generation of fans along the way. It's a shame that more wasn't done at the time to establish what happened to him. My heart goes out to those who loved him.

Anneghem Wall, via email

AH: Let me point you in the direction of the interview we've done with Richey's sister this week. It's on page 31, and is affectionate and heartwrenching. There's no questioning how keenly he's missed, as the tributes in our feature underline. It's rare for a rock star to come along who not only means a lot to people, but is incredibly cool as well. A true icon.

GORILLAZ IN THE MIDST

It's great to have Gorillaz back – I always enjoyed their crazy cartoon videos. They are the ultimate sign that Damon is, undoubtedly, a creative genius. I doubt they'll make anything as awesome as 'Clint Eastwood', but welcome back nonetheless.

Matthew Wilson, via email

AH: Their last album, 2011's 'The Fall', seems forever ago now, and Murdoc, Noodle and pals are up there with the greatest fake bands of all time. Albarn's solo album last year was arguably



his deepest yet, so the cartoony fun of a Gorillaz album would probably be a nice bit of light relief for him, after that.

LEAVE OFF THE RIP-OFFS

Newsflash – your favourite song is a rip-off of another song. And that song is likely a rip-off of another song. I love Tom Petty as much as the next guy, and would frankly rather soak my ear

drums in acid than listen to Robin Thicke's 'Blurred Lines' one more time. But recent internet uproars and legal wrangles over tracks that supposedly plagiarise older songs – the most recent being Sam Smith's 'Stay With Me', accused of borrowing melodies from Petty's 'I Won't Back Down' – forget that this is how pop music works. Artists have a right to protect their work, but zealously

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NME TRACK OF THE WEEK

1. Slaves
Feed The Mantaray

Slaves might look presentable with their smart shirts and neat barnets, but get too close and they'll bite your hand off. 'Feed The Mantaray' is another amusingly nasty shot of garage rock from the duo. "Paper walls are paper thin", deadpans Issac Holman, "God, I fucking hate you, Tim". Next week they'll open the NME Awards Tour 2015 with Austin, Texas. Get close, but not too close.

Greg Cochran, Editor, NME.COM

2. Twin Peaks
In The Morning (In The Evening)

The first taste of new music from Chicago quartet Twin Peaks since scorching second album 'Wild Onion' is typically rooted in '60s garage pop. Penned by guitarist Clay Frankel, it's hazy and lush, a sweet take on someone getting under your skin. "It could be anyone but baby it is you", he sighs, his bandmates' vocals providing an angelic echo. There's a twist, though, as Clay bursts the romance bubble: "And your big fat momma too".

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

3. Formation
Back Then

Formation are a south London duo indebted to 1970s funk, soul and the cerebral electro-pop of Hot Chip. With a repeated chant of "I just wanna be back then", this new single has one foot stomping in the past and the other shimmying into the future. The looped drumfills evoke 'Rescue Me' by '60s R&B star Fontella Bass, while the cowbell climax recalls the mad genius of LCD Soundsystem.

Eve Barlow, writer

4. The Very Best
Let Go

It takes a certain self-confidence to call yourselves The Very Best. On the evidence of atmospheric new tune 'Let Go', the Malawian/Swedish duo's assurance is founded. The song's epic swagger is aided by The Vaccines' Freddie Cowan on guitar and Vampire Weekend's Chris Baio on bass, but it's singer Esau's voice that takes centre stage. It swoops and soars, full of life-affirming grace and warmth. The Very Best at their very best.

Kevin EG Perry, writer

5. Mini Mansions
Freakout!

There's more to Mini Mansions than a guest spot from Alex Turner on previous song 'Vertigo', y'know. Take the giant 'Freakout!' – the fourth track from their upcoming 'The Great Pretenders' album – which builds from a 'Hardest Button To Button' squelch into some kind of glam-pop opera in its four-and-a-half minutes, all while discussing the pitfalls of loneliness: "With nobody around I'm bound to freak out, and I just keep on falling."

Tom Howard, Assistant Editor

**6. Unknown Mortal Orchestra**
Multi-Love

Ruban Nielson may sing about having his heart "trashed like a hotel room", but the title track from his third album as Unknown Mortal Orchestra isn't down in the dumps at all. The intro's piano hook is dreamy, but 'Multi-Love' is turned on its head by a funk drumbeat, a thwacking bassline and meandering synths. It's hard to keep up with Nielson's tricky psych-pop, but it's fun trying.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

7. Young Fathers
Rain Or Shine

Four months after winning the Mercury Prize for their debut album proper, 'Dead', Young Fathers are back with 'Rain Or Shine'. The first single from forthcoming album 'White Men Are Black Men Too' is a raucous ball of noise – part pop song, part spoken-word piece, with a catchy chorus and rhythmic drums to boot. It perfectly captures the Edinburgh trio's ability to take two opposing sounds and somehow craft something brilliant.

Nadia Khomami, Acting News Reporter

8. Nite Jewel
Infinity

LA electronica artist Ramona Gonzalez (aka Nite Jewel) hasn't released much since her 2012 second album 'One Second Of Love', but hopefully this eerie new number means another record isn't too far away. It's deeply atmospheric, juxtaposing swathes of dreamy synthesizers with a chaotic industrial sample and a simple, trap-influenced beat. Gonzalez's FKA Twigs-like vocal, meanwhile, is both hypnotic and seductive.

James Bentley, writer

9. Swim Deep
To My Brother

Birmingham's Swim Deep have always been wide-eyed dreamers. 2013 debut 'Where The Heaven Are We' was full of head-in-the-clouds indie-pop, but 'To My Brother' – the first taste of album two – is far more psychedelic. "The world grew tired of you because all the magic was in your head", sings Austin Williams over a cushion of 'Screamadelica' synths and heady guitar. There's no chance you'll get tired of this piece of psych sorcery.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

10. Moon Duo
Slow Down Low

After 'Animal' in December, 'Slow Down Low' is the second track taken from new album 'Shadow Of The Sun'. Where the former was hard, heavy and psychedelic, 'Slow Down Low' sees the Portland husband-and-wife duo – Sanae Yamada and Wooden Shjips guitarist Erik 'Ripley' Johnson – experiment with the blues. There's a motoring riff and an insistent drumbeat, but most alluring are the guitar solos that zig-zag through the fog.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

ESSENTIAL NEW TRACKS

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11. Angel Haze Candlxs

She might be known for dealing with her past traumas with steely bravado but Angel Haze opens up about her romance with model Ireland Baldwin on this big-hearted new single. *"I can barely sleep at night, you're the reason why"*, she says softly over flute-heavy production from Troy Noka. Coming as a surprise one-off release, it marks a turn into altogether more tender territory.

David Renshaw, Acting Deputy News Editor

12. THEESatisfaction EarthEE

Seattle rap/R&B duo THEESatisfaction release their second album, 'EarthEE' later this month. We've already heard one song – 'Recognition' – and now the title track, which features their friends Ishmael Butler from Shabazz Palaces and new Sub Pop signee Porter Ray, is online. It's great, a cosmic take on 'New Amerykah'-era Erykah Badu on which Cat Harris-White sings: *"Loosen up my mind/Lengthen and unwind"*.

Phil Hebblethwaite, writer

13. All Tvins Thank You

All Tvins – The Cast Of Cheers' Conor Adams and Adebisi Shank's Lar Kaye – might be from Belfast but 'Thank You' simply reeks of New York indie. A throbbing TV On The Radio bassline drives this synth-pop skyscraper, in which they sing, *"And now my love is gone"* with sheer resignation. Experience their heartbroken sentiment for yourself when the band head out on a UK tour next month.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

14. Föllakzoid Electric

On 2013 album 'II', Föllakzoid explored seismic psychedelia. It was a fearsome record, but follow-up 'III' promises to be even more powerful. First single 'Electric' shows the trio – based in Santiago, Chile – have developed an affection for bludgeoning techno. This almost 12-minute tune is built on a rigid pulse that drills into the ears while Föllakzoid deploy eerie synth sounds, faraway vocals and droning guitar. A bloodthirsty return.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

15. Hot Chip Huarache Lights

Apparently named after an early-'90s model of Nike trainers, 'Huarache Lights' is a bouncy taste of Hot Chip's sixth album. The rise of the machines provides inspiration for a track that puts toy technology to the fore, with vocoder robo-talking, computer singing and a fizzing synth bassline that refuses to be tamed. It ends with a mantra: *"Replace us with the things that do the job better"*.

Is their answer to 'The Man-Machine' imminent?

Dan Stubbs, News Editor



16. Julio Bashmore Kong

'Kong' – the latest teaser for Bristol producer Julio Bashmore's forthcoming debut album – is a chilled wash of gentle disco-house that wouldn't sound out of place in a swanky bar on a sunny Ibiza afternoon. London-based producer and singer-songwriter Bixby contributes soul-tinged vocals over off-beat hand claps and undulating synths. Another smash from the Bash.

Lucy Jones, Deputy Editor, NME.COM

17. Alabama Shakes Future People

Souled-out rockers Alabama Shakes are just about ready to give us a second album, and this is a stellar teaser. The opening guitar plucks have something of The Isley Brothers' 'Summer Breeze' or Booker T & The MGs' 'Time Is Tight' about them, but then the Shakes turn on the funk, firing out spiky riffs and farting fuzz bass as Brittany Howard hits the top of her range. A strutting comeback.

Matthew Horton, writer

18. Happyness A Whole New Shape

South London trio Happyness' first new material since last year's debut 'Weird Little Birthday' hones, rather than evolves their brilliant alchemy of pop-rock hooks and scrunched guitar noise. It's three and a half minutes of regretful lyrics (*"I wanna take it all back"*) laid over Pixies bass and upbeat drums. 'A Whole New Shape' is on a deluxe edition of 'Weird Little Birthday' out later this year, but suggests they're already looking to the future.

Al Horner, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

19. No Age Six Pack

Art aficionados No Age have covered 'Six Pack' as part of a limited-edition boxset of seven-inches for LA's Gallery 1988. Their faithful rendering of Black Flag's two-gear slab of punk leans heavily on the dark humour of the original, which was written about PCP-smoking, tranquiliser-snorting Black Flag founding member Keith Morris. *"I got a six pack and nothing to do, SIX PACK"*, Dean Allen Spunt screams, in his best Henry Rollins growl.

Hazel Sheffield, writer

20. Yung Don't Cry

Punk rock has been discovered alive and well and living in Denmark. Hot on the heels of Iceage, come Yung, a band for whom The Beatles and Sex Pistols should be spoken of in the same breath, judging by this buzzing, thrashy track. With singer Mikkel Holm Silkjær seemingly performing from the far end of a Ouija board, it's a stark and intriguing throwback that will hopefully make Mark Ronson take a long, hard look at his retro shtick.

Mark Beaumont, writer

The Week

► EVERYTHING THAT MATTERS IN MUSIC ■ EDITED BY DAN STUBBS



Smoky bacon

Cribs

The Cribs meet
their porcine
public in the
Bahamas,
January 2015

The Cribs head to the Bahamas to film video with colony of wild, swimming pigs

PHOTO BY NICK SCOTT

The video treatment read as follows: "Pig Island! You guys and a bunch of swimming pigs. We gotta do it!" And so, at the end of January, The Cribs jetted off to the Exumas Islands in the Bahamas to film the promo for über-catchy comeback single 'An Ivory Hand'. "We were interested because it was the Bahamas, it was pigs and it was fucking cute – everything about it, basically," says bassist/singer Gary Jarman. "It might look like we're flashing the cash now we're signed to a major, but the video was pretty cheap: the pigs were free."

The trip was fraught with problems. Friend and director Andy Knowles had to pull out at the last minute, Gary's flight from his hometown of Portland, Oregon was held up after a terrorist bomb threat and his luggage didn't make it as far as the Caribbean. On the first day of the shoot, one of the pigs bit drummer Ross' big toe ("It was a pretty nasty-looking mess," says Gary) and the boys' flights home were cancelled because of snowstorms in the US. But in spite of it all, the pigs made the whole experience worthwhile, says Gary. "There was one adolescent pink pig that walked up to the three of us, dropped to the ground and rolled over to get tickled like a dog. That guy won our hearts."

The band appear at London's Electric Ballroom on Thursday (February 12) to play one of the NME Awards Shows 2015 with Austin, Texas, which are taking over the capital in the run-up to Awards night on February 18. Gary promises "loads of new songs. That's the main thing, right?" ■ DAN STUBBS

► See the video for 'An Ivory Hand' on NME.COM on February 16



THE MINI INTERVIEW



Run The Jewels

You're performing at the NME Awards 2015 with Austin, Texas next week. What do you have in store?

El-P: "I don't want to spoil it but we have a guest that we're bringing with us. The guest is on our album..."

What do you know about the Awards?

Killer Mike: "I know that our management started dancing on their fucking desks like they'd got a great tax return, so I assumed it was a good thing."

You've been nominated for best album - have you prepared a speech just in case?

Killer Mike: "If we win I'll cry and if we lose I'll also cry!"

El-P: "We're big criers."

If you don't win, who else in your category would you like to see take the prize home?

Killer Mike: "I'm a diehard competitor - I don't want to see anybody else win but me! But with that said, I will congratulate every artist that could potentially beat us, because baring your soul as an artist is not an easy task to do."

Who would be your villain of the year?

Killer Mike: "The prosecutor at Ferguson who read that fucking hour-long statement just to say he wasn't indicting that piece of shit-ass cop."

El-P: "The American police force, collectively, is maybe in that category."

■ LEONIE COOPER

NME AWARDS 2015 with Austin — LIVE MUSIC CAPITAL OF THE WORLD —

NME Awards: the final countdown

Host Huw Stephens gets ready for the NME Awards 2015 with Austin, Texas

"I can't wait to host the NME Awards again on February 18. Last year was a baptism of fire - I remember meeting Paul McCartney onstage and being completely starstruck. I was so nervous I actually bowed! And one of Blondie stuck his middle finger up at me because their sound desk blew up just before they went onstage, but they went on and played an incredible gig regardless."

"How would I describe my presenting style? Amateurish, at best, but what you've got to remember is that everyone's pissed and nobody's there to listen to you. They want to hear who's won and the acceptance speeches! I'm hoping I'm heckled this year; it's moments like that which people remember. Fat White Family were the most, erm, *boisterous* last year, so they'll be a tough act to beat."

"The NME Awards are the ones everyone wants to come and have a drink at. It's a right laugh. It's at the O2 Academy Brixton, which is an incredible venue, and you have heroes like Damon Albarn turning up and giving amazing speeches because they know it's important. *NME* is one of the last bits of glue that brings us together in this busy, disparate online world. Even though bands there might have their differences, we're all fighting for the common good - which is interesting music and ideas getting heard."

"I haven't even thought about who I want to win the prizes. That's what I like about the NME Awards - it's always a surprise. And it's voted for by the fans - you can't argue with that." ■



THE LIVE LINE-UP FOR THE PARTY OF THE YEAR

Huw talks us through the four thrilling acts warming up for Suede's showstopper

► RUN THE JEWELS

HUW SAYS: "This will be brilliant - their album is incredibly deep. Killer Mike and El-P have got a lot to say, and they're definitely one of the most exciting things in hip-hop right now."

► ROYAL BLOOD

HUW SAYS: "Royal Blood will be incredible on the night. It's been an amazing year for them, and the success is so deserved. The energy Mike and Ben have onstage is electric - that's why festival stages suit them so well; they make a primal, urgent kind of music that is always a thrill to hear."

► CHARLI XCX

HUW SAYS: "I can't wait to hear Charli XCX perform 'Boom Clap' live - it's one of my favourite pop singles of last year. I like the fact she's been playing the pop game for a while and has become successful from hard work and great tunes."

► THE VACCINES

HUW SAYS: "I'm a big Vaccines fan - they've got an incredible style of melody and are great live. I'm really hoping they'll play some new material. I've only heard the single 'Handsomeness', which I like a lot - a great Justin vocal, great guitar sound."

Suede to take home 2015's Godlike Genius Award

The glam-pop legends will collect *NME's* ultimate honour on the big night – and will close the show with a special live performance

Last year: Blondie. The year before: Johnny Marr. Before that: Noel Gallagher, Dave Grohl, Paul Weller and many more. This year – at long last – we're honouring Suede with the coveted title of Godlike Genius. In the early '90s, the London-based group arrived in a scene dominated by US grunge and turned it on its head, bringing danger, sex and big glam tunes back. With their odes to seedy British suburbia, Suede paved the way for the likes of Blur, Oasis and Pulp to follow, creating the blueprint for Britpop and the cultural swing of the era. And they did it with a glut of classic albums, too, from sleazy debut 'Suede' to the swirling 'Dog Man Star' and finally, after 10 years in the wilderness, 2013's extraordinary comeback, 'Bloodsports'. Only a bunch of deities could match that kind of Lazarus-style return. His holiness Brett Anderson speaks...

How does it feel to be given *NME's* Godlike Genius Award?

Brett Anderson: "Oh God. Well, it's an honour, of course. It's a slightly outrageous thing to be called, but it's slightly tongue-in-cheek, isn't it? But it's wonderful to be recognised, and it's great for us having been through lots of ups and downs in our career. It's been a real roller-coaster ride of extreme highs and lows, so to be talking to you 25 years after we got together is lovely, really."

Do you feel like a god?

"Well, my day-to-day life is quite ungodlike, I have to reluctantly admit. I don't wear laurel wreaths or ride around on a chariot that often. Onstage is the only time: the magical feeling of power and omnipotence that one gets when one performs is the closest you ever get."

What do you have planned for your performance?

"We haven't decided yet, but we're going to have fun. You can expect Suede onstage playing Suede songs. If that's not good enough, then you're in the wrong place!"

Now you're gods, what's next for Suede?

"We're working on a new album, but it's not finished yet and we're still not quite sure what it is. All I can say is that I don't want it to be like that last album. 'Bloodsports' was almost like a debut again, and so this is going to be all about what you do on the second album." ■ BEN HEWITT

► SUEDE

HUW SAYS: "Suede are an important band for me. I think they showed me that indie rock didn't have to be macho or muscular, that you could have a sensitive side too. They're fascinating to look at and listen to. I like the fact they played with their sexuality. I remember seeing Brett on *Top Of The Pops*, bare chested in a little silk blouse, and thinking, 'Who's that?' They coupled huge anthems with interesting, memorable lyrics and they made me realise that you could be on the margins of the mainstream but still be successful. They've got some great songs and albums in their back catalogue, but they came back a couple of years ago and they've still got it. A very deserving winner."



Suede in the '90s: danger, sex and big glam tunes

FIVE GODLIKE MOMENTS FROM SUEDE'S ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER

1 'The Drowners' (single, May 1992)

Suede's debut was like a filthy jolt of electricity: from Bernard Butler's crunching guitar to Anderson's pouting, sexually ambiguous lyrics ("We kiss in his room/To a popular tune"). No wonder it was *NME's* Single Of The Year.

2 Brit Awards February 1993

After *NME* rubbished The Brits for failing to represent new, exciting music, the bash's organisers rushed to add Suede to the bill to save face. "I've never felt more out of place," said Brett, who thwacked his arse through it.

3 'Dog Man Star' (album, October 1994)

The seedy masterpiece of Suede's canon, 'Dog Man Star' was the *anti*-Britpop album. Anderson and Butler resolved to make an LP about the dark side of drugs and sex. Butler left before recording was finished, and hasn't returned since.

4 Teenage Cancer Trust Reunion Show March 2010

Suede's 2002 album 'A New Morning' had tanked so badly that they split shortly afterwards. But they returned – originally on a one-off basis – for a triumphant reunion show at London's Royal Albert Hall.

5 'Bloodsports' (album, March 2013)

The album that defied the naysayers and righted past wrongs: Suede chose to release their first new LP in over 10 years in order to give their legacy the send-off it deserved. Instead, a whole new chapter opened up.

► BE THERE!

How to join us at this year's *NME Awards*... Unless you're nominated, there are but two ways left to get yourself in to the party of the year. The last few tickets to attend the *NME Awards 2015* with Austin, Texas are available to buy right now, meaning you can witness all the action first hand on February 18 at London's O2 Academy Brixton. Head to NME.COM/tickets. We also have a pair of balcony tickets to give away to one lucky winner. Head to NME.COM/win, but be quick: the competition closes on Friday, February 13.

Psych dons Amorphous

Androgynous reveal what

really happened to Noel

Gallagher's scrapped album

'It was Noel's chance for revolution'



Amorphous Androgynous members Brian Dougans (left) and Gaz Cobain at work in the studio

One of the big questions facing Noel Gallagher on announcing new album 'Chasing Yesterday' was what happened to the record he made with Amorphous Androgynous, the British production duo who also work as The Future Sound Of London.

At a press conference in 2011, Gallagher said he'd be debuting as a solo artist with two albums – the Dave Sardy-produced 'High Flying Birds' that came out first, and another record, which he described as "fucking far out".

He added: "Some of it's vaudeville, some of it's space jazz, some of it's krautrock, some of it's soul, some of it's funk – and that's just the first song."

One track from it, 'Shoot A Hole Into The Sun', appeared as a B-side to 2012 single 'Dream On', and there are two songs on 'Chasing Yesterday' – 'The Right Stuff' and 'The Mexican' – that originated in the sessions. The rest, Gallagher told *NME* in January "will never see the light of day". The mixes aren't right and he "can't be arsed" to put it out.

Amorphous Androgynous' Gaz Cobain believes Gallagher could have behaved in a manner that was more "gracious". He says they had no idea Gallagher was working on two

albums simultaneously. "You're looking at a two-year process here – thousands of hours of our time. At no point was our record supposed to be a remix album or a companion piece." Indeed, Cobain claims he found out about the Sardy record when everyone else did – at the 2011 press conference. "At that point," he says, "we knew our record was fucked."

Gallagher, a fan of the first 'A Monstrous Psychedelic Bubble Exploding In Your Mind' compilation album that Cobain and partner Brian Dougans released in 2008, initially contacted the pair to remix 'Falling Down' from Oasis' 'Dig Out Your Soul'. Cobain says Gallagher loved their bonkers 22-minute edit, then dutifully handed them the demos for his first solo album to work on as sole producers, or so they thought. "For us, this had the potential to be the most exciting moment in modern fucking music history," Cobain says. "This was his solo album; this was the idea that Noel had held back in Oasis. Now was his moment of freedom; his moment of revolution."

But Noel was absent from sessions. "He gave us all the power and we conducted most of those two years in absolute isolation. I don't

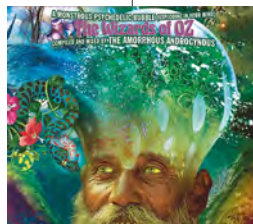
think he wanted to fully interface with the craziness of our music."

Cobain nonetheless hopes all the music will one day see the light of day. "If he fulfils his obligation to us, he'll get the tracks up on a mixing desk and remember what he already knows – that they're fucking great."

Cobain's upset, but not bitter. He's always

got on "totally well" with Noel and for now his mind is on other things: the third 'Monstrous Psychedelic Bubble' comp, 'The Wizards Of Oz', which digs deep into Antipodean psychedelia, and shows that Tame Impala and Pond – both of whom have tracks on the double CD mix – are part of a

tradition of space jazz, krautrock, dream pop and "coZmic funkrok" from the region. He's looking forward to it blowing people's minds, as he believes the Gallagher album would have done. "Psychedelia is our birthright, psychedelia is transcendence, psychedelia is not a fashion in music, it's spirituality," Cobain says. "Psychedelia is the ability to see that everything is connected; it's a fundamental human need." ■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE



GAZ COBAIN'S PICKS FROM 'THE WIZARDS OF OZ'

Russell Morris

The Real Thing 1969

"One of the most popular songs in Australia. Probably influenced by Donovan and the funky groove of UK producer Mickie Most."

Robert Thomsett

Flight Of Yaraan 1975

"From a very rare Aboriginal space-jam, jazz-impov album – 100 copies only. Now he's the head of a computer company!"

Cybotron

Raga In Asia Minor 1978

"Probably inspired by Giorgio Moroder and Tangerine Dream, but sounds brand new in 2015. Amazing piece of music."

Leong Lau

Salem Abdullah 1977

"We decided we needed some groovy cosmic funk on the album, which Australia lacks. Then we discovered Lau."



Pond

Fantastic Explosion 2011

"I find them a bit indie generic psych, so I edited this song a bit and made it fit into the fix. It sounds great now."

Kent punk duo **Slaves**
talk new album and puppy
love as they prepare for
their opening slot on the
NME Awards Tour 2015
with Austin, Texas



The new breed

When Slaves were interviewed for *NME's* new music special in January, they expressed concern about being seen as a joke band.

The lead track from debut album 'Are You Satisfied?' – due June 1, with the single a week earlier – won't do much to change that. It's called 'Feed The Mantaray' and frontman Isaac Holman says it's the Tunbridge Wells duo's answer to The B-52s' cartoon new-wave classic 'Rock Lobster'. "I think we were all just going a bit stir crazy in the studio," he says. "You can hear it in the song because it's fucking ridiculous. It's aquatic madness. I'd like to say there's some sort of hidden meaning you can look for, but it is just utter silliness."

Though Isaac says there's a serious thread about "personal politics" running through the album, the lighthearted single goes hand in hand with the LP's acid-pink sleeve, designed by Holman and guitarist Laurie Vincent and

depicting a pair of Bichon Frisé dogs – hardly the most punk-rock of pooches. "We've done photo shoots holding them like you'd be

holding a Staffordshire bull terrier," says Isaac. "We didn't want to give them back after. I think of them as a part of the band now."

For the sake of the poor mites, we hope Slaves won't be taking their fluffy friends along on the NME Awards Tour 2015 with Austin, Texas, which sees the duo opening for The Amazing Snakeheads, Fat White Family and Palma Violets at venues nationwide from February 19 to March 4. It promises to be one of the most raucous tours in recent memory. "I'm really excited to be on the bill with those bands," says Isaac, who promises attendees will hear at least a couple of their brand-new songs. "I'm a massive fan of Fat White Family and I've been into The Amazing Snakeheads for ages.

We haven't been gigging for a while – we don't know what to do with ourselves." ■ DAN STUBBS

See Slaves alongside
Palma Violets, Fat White
Family and The Amazing
Snakeheads at the
following venues...

Sheffield Leadmill (February 19) Leeds O2 Academy (20)
Newcastle O2 Academy (21) Glasgow O2 ABC (22)
Nottingham Rock City (24) Manchester The Ritz (26)
Oxford O2 Academy (27) Birmingham The Institute (28)
Bristol O2 Academy (March 2) Portsmouth Pyramid Centre (3)
London The Forum (4)

► **Get your tickets now from**
NME.COM/tickets

RELEASE THE BRATS

Isaac Holman talks us through key tracks on 'Are You Satisfied?'

Despair And Traffic

"It's a call-and-response, me and Laurie just shouting over a post-punk rhythm. The vocals are really cheesy, like ['80s new-wave band] A Flock Of Seagulls or something. It's about everyone moaning about the simple things in life."

Cheer Up London

"Me and Laurie recently moved into the Big Smoke after living in Kent for pretty much all our lives. This song was inspired by travelling on the underground

and just looking at all those horrible commuters hating life."

Are You Satisfied?

"People are gonna be surprised by this. It's short and stripped down, me playing piano, Laurie playing his acoustic guitar. We recorded it on an iPhone 4."

Live Like An Animal

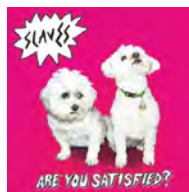
"It's about a man in Tunbridge Wells. I'd see him every day, laid out by the Millennium Clock, wasted. The lyric is, 'A carcass rotting in the midday sun.'"

Sugar Coated Bitter Truth

"It's got the same title as our last mini-album, but it's a new track, which will confuse people. Laurie uses a delay pedal."

99

"It's about how everybody just lives in their hands at the moment. You see couples in restaurants staring at phones. The lyric is '99 per cent of the time, she lives in her hands/ I can't understand why.'"



MY LIFE IN A SUITCASE

FIVE TOURING ESSENTIALS

Gaz

Coombes



Ex-Supergrass man



BOOK
Special
Deluxe
by Neil
Young

"It's his autobiography. I read the biography *Shakey* a few years ago and I was struck by what a unique character he is. It was really inspiring to read about how he approached stuff and his attitude towards recording."



BOXSET

Game Of Thrones

"I'm really looking forward to *Game Of Thrones* coming back.

I got sucked in like everyone else. I'm also working my way through the *House Of Cards* second season."

FILM

2001: A Space Odyssey

"It's visually stunning. It fits with that euphoric, drained feeling you have after a show when you just want to sit and be dazzled by images."

GAME

Football Manager

"I get so drawn in; it's terrible, actually. I really firmly believe that I'd be a good manager of a football team."

HOME COMFORT

iPad

"I like to travel light, and pick things up on the way. As long as I've got my phone with pictures of the kids, I'm fine. I guess I need my iPad because it's got my home life on it and shit like that: music and films."

► **Gaz Coombes plays**
Manchester Gorilla on
February 11

STAYING IN

THE BEST MUSIC ON TV, RADIO AND ONLINE THIS WEEK



All aboard for the Mumfords on Sky Arts, February 14

Mumford & Sons

Big Easy Express

▶WATCH Sky Arts, 11.25pm, February 14
In 2011, Mumford & Sons headed out on a vintage train from San Francisco to New Orleans with fellow bluegrass-loving bands Edward Sharpe And The Magnetic Zeroes and Old Crow Medicine Show. This film follows that journey and their performance stops along the way.

The Fall The Totally Wired World Of The Fall

▶LISTEN BBC 6 Music, 1pm, February 15
The Manchester firebrands have been making acerbic post-punk since they formed in 1976. Frontman Mark E Smith – the only constant member, who's overseen endless line-up changes – talks to Elizabeth Alker about the band's history and future, while

fans from bands such as Fat White Family, Buzzcocks and more contribute.

The Bohicas Xposure

▶LISTEN XFM, 10pm, February 16-17
The Essex newcomers (right) pop by XFM to play a handful of the tracks they've

released so far. Tune in for the rock'n'roll licks of 'Bloodhound' and 'Crush Me'.

Paul Smith Guy Garvey's Finest Hour

▶LISTEN BBC 6 Music, 2pm, February 15

The Maximo Park frontman joins Guy Garvey in the studio to play some of the music that

inspired his band, as well as the songs that galvanised his collaboration with Field Music's Peter Brewis, 'Frozen By Sight'.

The Districts

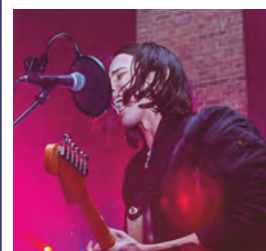
Xposure
▶LISTEN XFM, 10pm, February 11-12
Robby Grote, Conor Jacobus, Mark Larson and Braden Lawrence join John Kennedy in the studio to discuss second album, 'A Flourish And A Spoil', which is out this week. They'll also play some of the new record's highlights, including '4th And Roebling'.



GOING OUT

THE BEST LIVE EVENTS

THIS WEEK



Jungle

Josh Lloyd-Watson (above) and Tom McFarland join up with their backing band to recreate the funk magic of last year's self-titled debut album.

▶DATES Portsmouth Pyramids Centre (February 17)
▶TICKETS £16 from NME.COM/tickets with £1.60 booking fee

The Jesus And Mary Chain

The reunited Scottish band kick off their tour with dates in Liverpool and Leeds, with more to follow next week.

▶DATES Liverpool Guild Of Students (February 16), Leeds O2 Academy (17)
▶TICKETS £25 from gigsandtours.com with £2.50 booking fee

5 TO SEE FOR FREE

1. Duke Garwood

Rise, Bristol
▶February 12, 6pm

2. Blonde Bunny

Green Door Store, Brighton
▶February 12, 7pm

3. Ekkah

Start The Bus, Bristol
▶February 12, 8pm

4. Shinies

Shacklewell Arms, London
▶February 13, 8pm

5. Pond

Rough Trade East, London
▶February 17, 1pm

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PRIORITY

O₂

Swift has trademarked this slogan (right) from her '1989' LP



TAYLOR SWIFT CAN'T BE ALLOWED TO GET AWAY WITH TRADEMARKING LYRICS

BY BEN NORTON

The US pop star's attempts to license phrases from her songs might seem innocent, but it isn't at all, says the musician behind a viral protest song



When I first read that Taylor Swift has applied to trademark the phrase 'this sick beat' for merchandising purposes, I was blown away. It's just ridiculous.

My protest song 'This Sick Beat' began as a joke. I quipped on my Facebook account, "I'm gonna make an album called 'This Sick Beat', with 10 songs all called 'This Sick Beat'." But then I decided that night I would do one for real. Under the name Peculate, I wrote my song 'This Sick Beat' – which is experimental, like most of my music – as a parody of her trademark application. I wanted to tease the audience, so there's a moment where I keep on saying, "This... sick/This... sick/This... sick" and I never finish the phrase. When I posted it I thought it would reach my usual audience of around 2,000 people, but

it went viral. I think it shows that people are suspicious and angry about Taylor's attempt to trademark an average, everyday term.

She also applied to trademark a few other phrases, including 'Party like it's 1989' and "Cause we never go out of style". These phrases do not constitute creative work. 'This sick beat' is a phrase; it's an idiom that people use. This is the language that millions of people use in the English speaking world, and she's trying to 'own' it and say "I invented it", which is absurd. Especially when all the evidence demonstrates that it has been in existence long before she came along – there are YouTube videos in which people use that phrase that go back years.

My song is not meant to be a condemnation of Taylor Swift. I'm into experimental jazz, so it's not my cup of tea anyway, but I can see why people like 'Shake It Off'. It's catchy. McDonald's are guilty of the same thing too: 'I'm lovin' it' had been said for years but McDonald's claim they invented it and they own it.

What I want people to get out of this song is to think more critically about what 'property' is, because when people talk about property they just think it's this concrete, objective entity. Property reflects the interests of the ruling classes in society. A little over 150 years ago, people were considered property – they

were slaves. And I'm not trying to compare Taylor's trademarks to slavery, but when people recognise that just because something is protected as a property right and just because it is protected under trademark law, it doesn't necessarily justify you abiding by that. The only reason women are no longer considered the property of their husbands is because people spoke out about these unjust situations.

I already know what I'm going to do next. I'm going to take other common three word phrases like 'Scratch my back' and 'Off my lawn' and I'm going to make more songs. The most important thing about this is how it gets this message out there. I'm not being hyperbolic when I say that if you allow those in power to privatise average words, the next step is privatising everything. ■

► For more opinion and debate, head to NME.COM/blogs

LOST ALBUMS

#63

DZ Deathrays Black Rat (2014)

Chosen by Mike Kerr, Royal Blood



"In Australia, where they're from, DZ Deathrays are really popular, but they don't seem to be as well known in the UK. We've never played with them, but they've come to a few shows of ours and we met up with them in Leeds – they're really good guys. They've got quite a strange set-up: obviously they're a two-piece like us, but this record features a lot more guitars than their first one, which they kind of drop in and out live. For me, they don't sound like anything else out there, and this album is a very unique mix of pop, punk and thrash. It only came out last year, but it's fucking amazing and I think more people should know about them."



► THE DETAILS

- **RELEASE DATE**
August 18, 2014
- **LABEL** Infectious
- **BEST TRACKS** Northern Lights, Fixations, Reflective Skull
- **WHERE TO FIND IT**
Independent record stores
- **LISTEN ONLINE** On Spotify

IN THE STUDIO

Following his soundtrack for *Her*, the wild man of Arcade Fire goes it alone with an “unhinged” album that’s full of “dumb humour”

Will Butler



'Policy' will be the first solo album from Will Butler (pictured at home here and below left)

Whether making victory laps over the monitors or bashing a tom-tom while throwing himself down a staircase like he's made of rubber, Will Butler is the ultimate comic foil for big brother Win's more serious presence at Arcade Fire shows. Will joined the group when he was still at university, and has been a key member ever since. So it's a small wonder that last year, in the middle of Arcade Fire's biggest tour yet, he found a minute to record his first solo album, 'Policy' – eight ragged tracks of rock'n'roll about chasing love and running from bogeymen.

"In Arcade Fire it's always been like, 'Give me 115 per cent until you're nearly dead.' We've only recently got our rhythm right, so between touring we have energy for something other than sitting at home drinking warm broth," Will tells *NME* down the phone from the US.

The decision to go solo was half his, half fate: in 2013 Win and wife/co-frontperson

Régine were living with Spike Jonze in his New York apartment, where they planned to write the soundtrack to Jonze's movie *Her*, a bittersweet reflection on human interaction starring Joaquin Phoenix. Then recording sessions for the 'Reflektor' album heated up at the same time as Régine fell pregnant, and Will got thrown the half-finished score. He set to, becoming the technical bridge between Jonze's vision of the film and fellow collaborator Owen Pallett's virtuoso songwriting. A few months later, his work earned him an Oscar nomination for Best Original Score. "[Solo work] was kind of forced on me; I feel like my name was suddenly out there," he laughs.

In May, just before Arcade Fire embarked on the festival circuit, Will snatched a week in Electric Lady studios to record with his wife and a few friends. They laid down 'Policy' in sequential order, making good on the scraps of lyrics and half-cut tunes that Will had been keeping in his head as long as he could play.

On the album, only 'Witness' is about policy in any political sense – and even that's about shirking responsibility for doing something to fix social ills. Instead, 'Policy' sets out Will's own personal view of the world as an upside-down cabaret where people cook macaroni and dream of being able to fly just so they can beat the shit out of birds. "There's a little more dumb humour than you find in Arcade Fire," Will explains. "To me, it's a bit like the world of *Moby Dick*

"IN ARCADE FIRE IT'S ALWAYS BEEN LIKE, 'GIVE ME 115 PER CENT'.... THE TIME TO DO IT IS DEFINITELY NOW"

– you think of it as a serious work of American literature, but it starts off with this slapstick sequence and jokes about whale pensises."

There's also a lot less fuss, musically. Big melodies are held together by scattershot drums, saxophone squeals and vocal stabs.

It all feels like it could unravel at any minute – one of the things Will admires in his favourite artists, from Ghostface Killah to Violent Femmes. "There's an element of being unhinged," Will says. "Ghostface Killah has that assertive comedy and mindless violence, similar to the Violent Femmes where there is pure id. I was definitely playing with that."

He says the rest of Arcade Fire were excited for him. They gathered round a laptop to hear Zane Lowe's first play of 'Take My Side' over the Christmas holidays. But Will's not sad to finally get the stage to himself. "The time to do it is definitely now," he says. ■ HAZEL SHEFFIELD

► THE DETAILS

- **TITLE** Policy
- **RELEASE DATE** March 16
- **LABEL** Merge
- **PRODUCER** Will Butler
- **RECORDED** Electric Lady Studios, New York
- **TRACKS INCLUDE** 'Take My Side', 'Witness', 'Anna'
- **WILL BUTLER SAYS** "It's a giant crazy mishmash that in the end is unified, but the bits and pieces are weird and hilarious."



ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM



"EVERYONE TOLD US WE WOULDN'T SELL ANY RECORDS"

Marc Bolan



UNICORN

TYRANNOSAURUS REX

THIS WEEK...

Tyrannosaurus Rex: Unicorn

Newly available in a remastered edition, Marc Bolan's whimsical hippy classic predated his glam-rock pomp

THE BACKGROUND

Discovered by future David Bowie producer Tony Visconti, who was struck by frontman Marc Bolan's obvious star power and sex appeal, Tyrannosaurus Rex released two albums – 1968's 'My People Were Fair And Had Sky In Their Hair... But Now They're Content To Wear Stars On Their Brows' and 'Prophets, Seers & Sages: The Angels Of The Ages' – that made them darlings of London's hippy underground scene. Bolan's songs were a whimsical mix of folk, fantasy and mysticism, and the band were championed by John Peel, though they had enjoyed only modest success, scoring Top 40 singles with 'Deborah' and 'One Inch Rock'. On their third album – produced, again, with Visconti – they were given more money and studio time, resulting in their best-sounding and most fully realised effort to date.

STORY BEHIND THE SLEEVE

The simple cover shot of Bolan and Steve Peregrin Took was taken by Peter Sanders, a London-based photographer who also shot Dylan, Hendrix, The Doors and the Stones. Shortly after the album's release, Sanders travelled to India and Morocco, converted to Islam and became one of the few western photographers granted permission to photograph the pilgrimage to Mecca.

FIVE FACTS

- 1 'Unicorn' was founder member Steve Peregrin Took's last album with the band. When Bolan rejected many of Took's songs on the follow-up, the percussionist recorded a solo album. This further incensed Bolan, who eventually replaced him with Mickey Finn.
- 2 During the band's US tour, Took found a novel way for the band to stand out from the louder heavy-rock groups they shared bills with – he would take off his shirt and whip himself with his belt until he bled.
- 3 Tony Visconti's references for 'Unicorn' were The Beach Boys and Phil Spector, whose famous Wall Of Sound he and Bolan tried their best to recreate on their limited budget.
- 4 'Cat Black (The Wizard's Hat)' is one of the oldest songs on the record, pre-dating Bolan's previous band, John's Children, which he had quit in 1967.
- 5 John Peel can be heard droning on about "the emperor of the sky-skinned airships" and "albino-eyed hedgehogs" on the song 'Romany Soup'.

LYRIC ANALYSIS

"A mad mage with a maid on his eyebrows/Hunteth the realm for a god/Who could teach him the craft of decanting/The glassy entrails of a frog" – 'Chariots Of Silk'

Bolan was an avid reader of JRR Tolkien's *Lord Of The Rings* and CS Lewis' *Narnia* books, and his lyrics are full of magic and wizards.

"Warm and wise as a mute/In the thunderbolt suit" – 'Like A White Star, Tangled And Far, Tulip That's What You Are'

Bolan's lyrics had a surreal, Dylan-like imagery. As he put it, "Dylan made me aware that you could use good words with pop music. Before that I'd just written poetry, not songs."

"She was born to be my unicorn/Robed head of ferns/Cat child, tutored by the learned" – 'She Was Born To Be My Unicorn'

There were two women in Bolan's life: his girlfriend June, whom he would soon marry, and American singer Marsha Hunt, with whom he started a brief affair during the recording of 'Unicorn'.

WHAT WE SAID THEN

"A happy, warming sound, absorbing, refreshing and stimulating" – Allen Evans, NME, May 24, 1969

WHAT WE SAY NOW

The first three Tyrannosaurus Rex albums are like a lost world of hippy innocence and naivety. 'Unicorn' may be very much of its time, but that's its charm.

FAMOUS FAN

"I remember Marc Bolan sitting there cross-legged and saying 'more sound on microphone two' or something... And you know the way the roadies go on and fix up the microphones? I'd look at them and think, 'Even that would be good.' You just wanted to be part of it." **Tony Blair, 2005**

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"The only reason that T Rex has been anywhere near successful is that, basically, I only work in truth. I've never written anything to be commercial, because everyone in the world told us we wouldn't sell any records." **Marc Bolan, 1969**

THE AFTERMATH

Bolan would embrace the electric guitar on 1970's 'A Beard Of Stars', and shortly after, Tyrannosaurus Rex were renamed T Rex. The success of 'Ride A White Swan' reinvented Bolan as glam rock's first icon; between 1971 and 1972, there was no bigger pop star in Britain. He was killed in a car accident on September 16, 1977.

THE DETAILS

▶RECORDED 1968-1969 ▶RELEASE DATE May 16, 1969 ▶LENGTH 39:46 ▶PRODUCER Tony Visconti ▶HIGHEST UK CHART POSITION 12 ▶UK SALES unknown ▶WORLDWIDE SALES unknown ▶SINGLES None ▶TRACKLISTING ▶1. Chariots Of Silk ▶2. 'Pon A Hill ▶3. The Seal Of Seasons ▶4. My Throat Of Winter ▶5. Cat Black (The Wizard's Hat) ▶6. Stones For Avalon ▶7. She Was Born To Be My Unicorn ▶8. Like A White Star, Tangled And Far, Tulip That's What You Are ▶9. Warlord Of The Royal Crocodiles ▶10. Evening Of Damask ▶11. The Sea Beasts ▶12. Iscariot ▶13. Nijinsky Hind ▶14. The Pilgrim's Tale ▶15. The Misty Coast Of Albany ▶16. Romany Soup

TheWeek NEWSDESK

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

**"We'd get together to make some music
but we never really did, not properly.
That will haunt me to my dying days"**

Pete Doherty reveals his regret at never recording with Amy Winehouse

THE NUMBERS

\$47 million

Amount Jay Z bid for Scandinavian music streaming service Wimp.

8/1

Bookies' odds on Florence + The Machine headlining Glastonbury. Foo Fighters and AC/DC are hot favourites too.



€100

Tip given to Sheffield jazz pianist Ralph Salt by an unlikely fan – Slipknot's Sid Wilson.

118.5 million

Katy Perry's Super Bowl audience, the highest for a halftime show since records began.

WHO THE FUCK ARE...



Wee-Z Top

This is the one-time-only supergroup formed by Weezer and ZZ Top for a new series on *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* called Mash Up Mondays. **What a great idea...** Indeed. Weezer and ZZ Top were the first to perform with a rendition of the latter's 'Sharp Dressed Man'. More acts will follow: "Morris Day And The Haim" (Morris Day & The Time plus Haim) and "Aloe Blaccstreet" (Aloe Blacc plus Blackstreet) are booked for future appearances. **Any more?** Not yet. We suggest The Jesus And Mary 2 Chainz.

+ GOOD WEEK +



Gorillaz

Illustrator Jamie Hewlett posted new pictures of Noodle and Murdoc via Instagram with the words, "Yes. Gorillaz returns." It suggests that he and Damon Albarn have patched up their differences, and that fresh pop genius is on its way.

- BAD WEEK -



Suge Knight

The Death Row Records founder has been charged with murder following a hit-and-run incident in which a man was killed. His lawyers claim it was an accident. Knight pleaded not guilty in court and was later taken to hospital with chest pains.

IN BRIEF

Don't remind me

Nickelback singer Chad Kroeger has been snapped in the studio with boyband One Direction, which may solve the question of what happens when an unstoppable force meets an immovable object. Likely, terrible music.

Kale-o

Beyoncé has started her own vegan delivery service named 22 Days Nutrition. Sample dishes include cabbage lentil bowl and ratatouille pasta with pesto. Yum.

The one who spins

Breaking Bad actor RJ Mitte has bagged himself a new career as a DJ. Better known for playing Walter White Jr in the hit TV series, Mitte will appear at an event in New York named Breaking Beats this April.

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Official RECORD STORE Chart

TOP 40 ALBUMS FEBRUARY 8, 2015



NEW 01 Bob Dylan Shadows In The Night COLUMBIA

The legendary musician's 36th album consists solely of classic songs made popular by Frank Sinatra. Dylan takes the top spot on this week's chart.

- NEW 2 B4.Da.ss **Joey Badass** RELENTLESS
- 3 Modern Nature **The Charlatans** BMG RIGHTS
- 4 Girls In Peacetime Want To Dance **Belle & Sebastian** MATADOR
- 5 Stay Gold **First Aid Kit** COLUMBIA
- 6 Matador **Gaz Coombes** HOT FRUIT/CAROLINE
- 7 Lost In The Dream **The War On Drugs** SECRETLY CANADIAN
- 8 What A Terrible World, What A Beautiful World **The Decemberists** ROUGH TRADE
- 9 Modern Blues **The Waterboys** Harlequin And Clown
- NEW 10 Lost Themes **John Carpenter** SACRED BONES
- 11 Hozier **Hozier** ISLAND
- 12 X **Ed Sheeran** ASYLUM
- 13 Computer Controlled Acoustic Instruments – Pt 2 **Aphex Twin** WARP
- 14 Wanted On Voyage **George Ezra** COLUMBIA
- 15 Man It Feels Like Space Again **Pond** CAROLINE
- NEW 16 Wallflower **Diana Krall** VERVE
- 17 No Cities To Love **Sleater-Kinney** SUB POP
- NEW 18 In The Pink Of Condition **H Hawkline** HEAVENLY
- 19 The Endless River **Pink Floyd** RHINO
- 20 Natalie Prass **Natalie Prass** SPACEBOMB/CAROLINE
- 21 Title **Meghan Trainor** EPIC
- 22 Viet Cong **Viet Cong** JAGJAGUWAR
- 23 Our Love **Caribou** CITY SLANG
- 24 Uptown Special **Mark Ronson** COLUMBIA
- 25 On Your Own Love Again **Jessica Pratt** DRAG CITY
- 26 Panda Bear Meets Grim Reaper **Panda Bear** DOMINO RECORDINGS
- 27 In The Lonely Hour **Sam Smith** CAPITOL
- 28 AM **Arctic Monkeys** DOMINO RECORDINGS
- 29 Royal Blood **Royal Blood** WARNER BROS
- 30 Ghost Culture **Ghost Culture** BECAUSE MUSIC
- 31 A Perfect Contradiction **Paloma Faith** RCA
- 32 1989 **Taylor Swift** EMI
- 33 American Beauty/American Psycho **Fall Out Boy** DEF JAM
- NEW 34 1000 Forms Of Fear **Sia** MONKEY PUZZLE/RCA
- 35 Unguarded **Rae Morris** ATLANTIC
- 36 Sonic Highways **Foo Fighters** RCA
- NEW 37 Liquid Spirit **Gregory Porter** BLUE NOTE
- NEW 38 Love In The Future **John Legend** COLUMBIA
- NEW 39 All Over The World – The Very Best Of **ELO** EPIC
- NEW 40 Chapter One **Ella Henderson** SYCO MUSIC

The Official Charts Company compiles the Official Record Store Chart from sales through 100 of the UK's best independent record shops from Sunday to Sunday.

TOP OF THE SHOPS



THIS WEEK THE MUSIC ROOM TAVISTOCK FOUNDED 2010

WHY IT'S GREAT It may be small but there are plenty of gems to discover, from rock and pop through to country, classical and more.
TOP SELLER LAST WEEK The Waterboys – 'Modern Blues'
THEY SAY "We are in an amazing Tudor building and attached to a fantastic independent bookshop."

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► **YOU HEARD IT HERE FIRST** ■ EDITED BY MATT WILKINSON

NME
NEW
BAND
 OF THE WEEK



The Bohicas

The Hainault foursome's dancefloor punk kicks against suburban malaise

I've paid the price of being bored in my bedroom at my parents' house. I've worked in the Wetherspoon's. And I'd rather slit my wrists than do that again. Nah, it's much better to write a little tune and make a bunch of people shake their arses a bit, make them happy." Dominic McGuinness might just be the most fiery frontman in the UK right now. Aged 25 and having lived almost every day of it in Hainault – the suburban town towards the end of the underground line where Essex and London meet – he's spent the past few years waiting patiently for his time to come. He's watched as brother Eugene's career as a songwriter and session musician took off, and he's seen other, lesser bands make serious waves ahead of his own act, The Bohicas.

Now signed to Domino and with a back pocket stuffed full of three-minute Brit-punk and Chuck Berry-influenced jams, there's a sense that he's

got a lot to get off his chest. Ask him about his aims for the four-piece and his response is resolute: "I want us to hit you in the guts." Ask him about the competition he faces in the charts, meanwhile, and he starts spouting stuff about living in a cultural wasteland. "You'd literally need a war to get The Beatles to happen again, mate! It is a *bollocks* time to be in a band right now. But am I down about it? No! Because this is the most exciting thing I've ever done with my life."

▼
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Alongside Dom John (guitar), Brendan Heaney (drums) and Adrian Acolatse (bass), McGuinness has got much to be excited about. Live, The Bohicas are a thrillingly tight prospect, as much about aesthetics – they look like a proper gang – as the music. Early single 'XXX' swings by with the kind of no-bullshit ethos that drives QOTSA, while other tracks are more filmic. They're inspired by the romanticism that comes with Tarantino and John Wayne films, they say, and they're all about escapism – from their hometown, from crappy jobs, and even from the "fucked" music scene that lies ahead of them. "Our music is for the hips, you know?" asserts McGuinness. "We're not aiming for the brain." ■ MATT WILKINSON

► THE DETAILS

- **BASED** East London
- **FOR FANS OF** Queens Of The Stone Age, The Clash
- **SOCIAL** facebook.com/thebohicas
- **BUY IT** Single 'To Die For' is out now
- **SEE THEM LIVE** London Tufnell Park Dome, NME Awards Show With Austin, Texas (February 12), London Koko (17), London Tooting Tram & Social (20)
- **BELIEVE IT OR NOT** One of the band was an extra in a Harry Potter film – but they say they'll never reveal who

MORE NEW MUSIC

Simmer

Cheshire's Simmer initially formed after discovering a mutual love for Fugazi and Sunny Day Real Estate, and recently set the blogosphere buzzing with the track 'Head Trip'. On it, ambient walls of feedbacking guitar are strewn with hardcore-style riffs to create a mightily impressive noise.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/simmercheshire

► **HEAR THEM** simmeruk.bandcamp.com

Krak Krak

Featuring a former member of cult '00s racket-makers Eighties Matchbox B-Line Disaster in drummer Rob Ling, Brighton band Krak Krak are as violently noisy as they are breathlessly fun. There are shades of Mclusky and Pulled Apart By Horses on their debut EP, out on February 23 via Sonic Anhedonic.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/krakkrakuk

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/krakkrak

Brunch

East London slackers Brunch make no secret of their love for all things Stephen Malkmus on their recent debut EP, a five-track m  le of crunchy guitar hooks, drunken vocals, jokes about frogs and dilapidated pop-

Dilly Dally

rock squalor. Original? Not hugely. Fun? You better believe it.

► **SOCIAL** twitter.com/brunchmatters

► **HEAR THEM** brunchmatters.bandcamp.com

NME BUZZ BAND OF THE WEEK

Dilly Dally

Toronto's Dilly Dally announced themselves at the tail end of 2014 with self-released seven-inch single 'Candy Mountain' – and since then their profile has grown rapidly. A haunting thrum of grunge guitars and yowled vocals, their sound manages to be both sinister and thrilling. Singer Katie Monks' slurred mumbles and moans may split opinion, but to us they're sublime.

► **SOCIAL** twitter.com/dillydallyto

► **HEAR THEM** dillydally.bandcamp.com/

Audego

With a combusive rhythm and rumbling bass at its root, Audego's latest track, 'Feral', lives up to its title. But there's an intriguing juxtaposition to the madness, too, between the



Audego

loping synths and singer Carolyn Tariq's sultry vocals. The Melbourne duo are currently working on their third album, having won the best dance/electronica album award for 'Beneath The Static And The Low' at the Independent Music Awards in 2014.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/audegomusic

► **HEAR THEM** audego.bandcamp.com

Strange Collective

Explosive bursts of feedback and a tripped-out garage-rock aesthetic have seen Strange Collective favourably compared to San Francisco's Thee Oh Sees, but this quartet's psych antics were born of the chilly northwest of England rather than the sun-soaked West Coast of California. The Liverpool outfit have already been bigged up by local festivals Sound City and Psych Fest, and are currently working on their debut single 'Sun'.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/strangecollective

► **SEE THEM LIVE** Liverpool 24 Kitchen Street (February 28)

Radar NEWS ROUND UP

KING GIZZARD RETURN

One of *Radar's* favourite Aussie bands of recent years, King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard, have announced their UK return alongside a new single via Heavenly, 'Slow Jam 1'. The band, who tore up CMJ last year, play Manchester Sound Control (July 8) and London Scala (9).

TEAR TALK MEET MJ

Liverpool newcomers Tear Talk are set to work with MJ from Hookworms on new material. Although no titles or release dates have been confirmed, the band will hook up with the producer at his Leeds studio over the next month, and he'll be co-producing alongside fellow Scouse act By The Sea.

Oscar



Tear Talk



OSCAR TOURS

Witchita man Oscar has announced a new UK tour this spring. He'll head out on the road this April and May in support of new single 'Daffodil Days', which is released on March 1. The gigs take in Brighton, Manchester, Bristol, Cardiff and London, where he'll head up a bill at Electrowerkz on April 2.

GIRLS NAMES GET GROSS

Northern Ireland act Girls Names' have released two impressive albums, and now guitarist Philip Quinn has teamed up with Autumns' Christian Donaghey in Gross Net. The debut cassette EP is out now on Art For Blind Records. Meanwhile, Autumns release EP 'Blonde' on Monday (February 16).

► For daily new music recommendations and exclusive tracks and videos go to NME.COM/NEWMUSIC

Chicago's finest set
to play DIY gigs as
part of their UK tour

Twin Peaks: 'We want to play your house party!'



Go see Chicago's Twin Peaks live and you'll experience a riot of tongue-wagging, head-thrashing rock'n'roll joy. It's an exhilarating craft the band have honed playing both regular and DIY shows across the States. One of the more unconventional ones – a Bushwick rooftop at 1am during New York's new music festival CMJ last October – ended with the police shutting things down and threatening to write up those in attendance for underage drinking before Twin Peaks even had a chance to play. As singer and guitarist Cadien Lake James explains three months later, playing impromptu gigs has recently begun to get a little “frustrating” for the band.

“Too many people are coming out,” he drawls sleepily down the phone from his friend's house in Chicago. “When the energy's there you can just have a party with your friends, but sometimes playing in basements and having to get my pedals knocked over... It still has to be so good, it still has to sound right.”

But when the band – completed by drummer Connor Brodner, bassist/singer Jack Dolan and guitarist/singer Clay Frankel

– return to the UK next week, they'll be brushing off the fatigue and embracing the excitement of plugging into unconventional spaces again. For their second visit to these shores, they'll be playing a handful of ‘extra’ shows across the country – from fans' house parties to dodgy warehouses.

“We've done DIY dates all over the West Coast,” says Cadien, “but not in different countries. I'm interested to see what's up – everything's different out there a little bit, but also the same. As long as [the people there] want to have a good time with me, I want to have a good time with them. ‘*Open eyes and open arms/You can't worry too much because worry only does you harm*’. That's a verse off our new record.”

Last time Twin Peaks came across the Atlantic, they brought with them the shaky rock'n'roll of their second album, ‘*Wild Onion*’ (released just before they landed in London in September 2014), from the breakneck

ride-or-die punk anthem of ‘*Fade Away*’ to the dreamier ‘*Mirror Of Time*’ and lilting new single ‘*Making Breakfast*’. They say the clutch of shows they played in London on that trip made it almost feel like home.

“It felt like hometown Chicago in [east London club] Birthdays,” Clay recalls. “People were singing and screaming, but then in the back of your mind you're like, ‘I've never even been here before...’”

“We just got drunk a whole lot,” Jack says of their free time in the UK, with its lower drinking age. “We could just walk down the street and buy a beer whenever we wanted to.”

“We smoked a lot of weed, too,” Cadien chips in. “We went to this hash cafe a couple of times. It was some underground shit. This guy has the top floor of a building and it's got this inside part and a roof deck. He's selling weed, beer, hash cakes, coffee... it was great.”

This time round, they're promising something “way better”. Their friend Colin Croom has been added to the touring line-up on keyboards



Twin Peaks: (l-r)
Jack Dolan, Clay
Frankel, Cadien
Lake James and
Connor Brodner



"AS LONG AS PEOPLE IN BRITAIN WANT TO HAVE A GOOD TIME WITH ME, I WANT A GOOD TIME WITH THEM" Cadien Lake James

and third guitar, with Cadien explaining it's a move that means "we can fully realise a lot of the stuff more". They're itching to get back, not least because they're hyped to play the 100 Club, a venue that their heroes the Stones played back in the day ("I'm gonna go shit on the toilet Mick Jagger shat on," says Cadien). Unsurprisingly, given how they like to relax, they're also psyched to pay Amsterdam a visit on the European leg of this run of dates. "Our booking agent gave us a day off in Amsterdam and I'm pretty sure it's not a coincidence," Cadien laughs.

Over the last couple of months, the band have been working on new material, and while it's unlikely they'll give us a glimpse of any of

it on this return tour – although Cadien does concede "we've got another week of practice, so maybe I can get the boys to sneak something in" – they're not hanging around waiting to record it.

With two tracks already laid down a couple of weeks ago – potentially for a Record Store Day release – the band are aiming to begin recording album three in April. Whenever it arrives, you can expect it to be as wild and varied as its predecessor, as Cadien explains. "It sounds like us. Clay's doing his Velvet Underground and Rolling Stones thing, but he's been listening to Fat White Family too, so it's got a little weirdness in there nowadays. I can't talk about my stuff."

He pauses to sound out some opinions from his friends across the room. "Hey you guys, what's my stuff sound like?" After a series of muffled responses, he reports back. "I'm hearing some more Kinks, some more Beach Boys. Getting more retro. Same things I always drew from but maybe closer to the tee. Not more of a rip-off necessarily but" – he lowers his voice to a dramatic whisper – "the actual styles of the old. It sounds like Stonehenge."

Subject-wise, Cadien's a bit more abstract and vague in his descriptions, refusing to pin down exactly what the new songs are about apart from one bizarre image. "I'm not necessarily writing all about this dude, but I'm at my friend's house and they've got this picture of a guy [on the wall]. But he's not really a guy, it's a tiger with an eye patch in a suit. He's an inspiring-looking dude. I'm getting some ideas – he's missing an eye but he's still the lord of the household." He breaks into manic laughter. "I wish there's a way I could send you a picture."

Twin Peaks have the chops to write songs that can make you feel alive at the same time as meaning the world. "Someone posted on our Tumblr anonymously, like 'my friend was dealing with depression and tried to commit suicide so I showed them 'I Found A New Way' and they're telling me how they're so happy to be alive'," says Cadien, wide-eyed. "If one of our songs is making that happen for anyone..." he trails off in disbelief. Whether restoring light in the dark or just soundtracking messy nights out, there's no denying Twin Peaks' ability to blast away the bad with some of the most unrepentantly exciting, chaotic and dazzling rock'n'roll around right now – wherever the venue happens to be. ■ RHIAN DALY

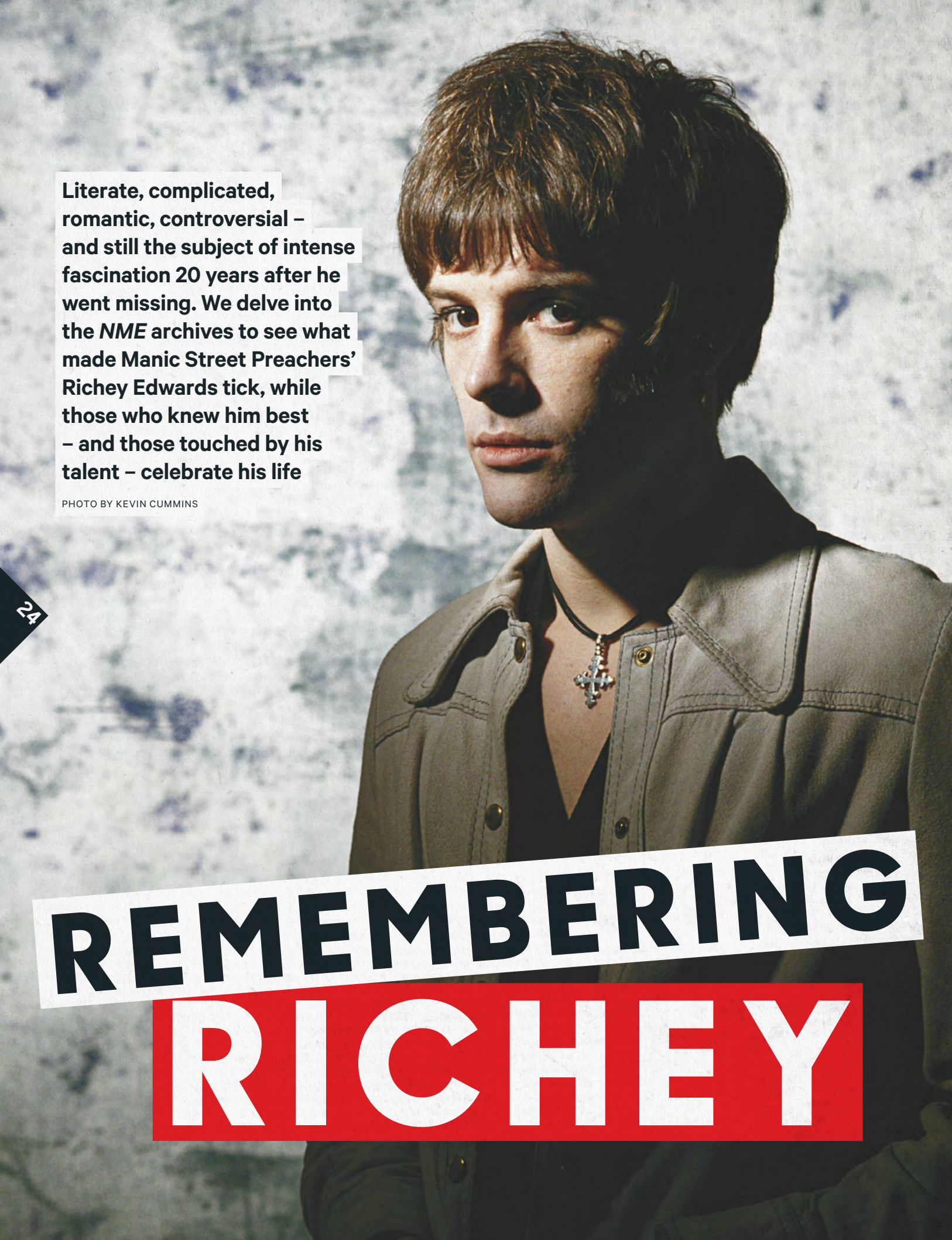
**TWIN PEAKS:
AVAILABLE
FOR PARTIES,
WEDDINGS,
BAR MITZVAHS...**

Twin Peaks hit the UK next Tuesday (February 17) for one week. They're aiming to play as many shows as possible during that time, and are asking fans to message them at facebook.com/twinpeaksdudes with ideas. As well as a sold-out NME Awards Show with Austin, Texas at London's iconic 100 Club that night, they've got the following confirmed so far:

- London 100 Club (February 17)
- London DIY show (19)*
- Manchester Night & Day Café (20)
- Glasgow Garage (21)
- Leeds DIY show (22)*
- Liverpool DIY show (23)*
- Birmingham DIY show (24)*

► *Check facebook.com/twinpeaksdudes for up-to-date location info and ticket details on the DIY gigs



A portrait of Richey Edwards, a young man with dark, shaggy hair and bangs, looking slightly to the left. He is wearing a dark, buttoned shirt under a light-colored leather jacket. A necklace with a cross pendant is visible. The background is a textured, light-colored wall.

Literate, complicated,
romantic, controversial –
and still the subject of intense
fascination 20 years after he
went missing. We delve into
the *NME* archives to see what
made Manic Street Preachers’
Richey Edwards tick, while
those who knew him best
– and those touched by his
talent – celebrate his life

PHOTO BY KEVIN CUMMINS

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REMEMBERING RICHEY

A MANIC LIFE

Richey's career told through the pages of NME

In 1994, the year before Richey Edwards disappeared, in the run-up to 'The Holy Bible', I accompanied the Manic Street Preachers on a trip to Bangkok. Only Nicky Wire and Sean Moore managed to hang on to any semblance of decorum. The rest of the sprawling party, James Dean Bradfield and myself included, descended into a state of alcohol-induced "moral coma", whooping it up at 'girlie' bars in the notorious Patpong district.

However, it was Richey's behaviour that had the most impact. When the Manics played at the MBK venue, he cut himself so badly that blood coursed down his torso onstage. Even more shockingly, he visited a local sex worker and paid for a hand-job. When I told Richey that people were going to think that he was a sexist, exploitative asshole, he didn't argue or make excuses – he quietly agreed.

To my mind, this duality encapsulated Richey – chaos, provocation and drama, followed by intellectual self-examination and logic, and a calm bordering on stillness. As with Nicky, the wit and fearlessness Richey displayed in lyrics also extended to conversation. Clever, literate, corrosively honest, Richey was always ready to debate. Then there was the other Richey – a shy, shivering, chain-smoking bundle of nerve endings, who spoke of his "childlike loneliness" and fear of relationships.

Was Richey missing a skin, that vital layer of self-protective psychic padding, the lack of which so often seems to separate true artists from the herd? Is this why so many people (strangers), still miss him, because he 'spoke' for them – the lonely, the frightened, the 'too-clever-for-their-own-good', the 'over-sensitive', the cutters?

Of course, as time has repeatedly proven, the Manics weren't just about Richey – there were always four jewels studding that crown. Such levels of artistry, intensity, damn impertinence, and (dare I say it?) working class-ness, only seem to come around once every generation, if that.

Yet something must explain the enduring sadness about Richey's disappearance. Back in 1995, my fear was that it would play out as a tacky 'rock'n'roll Lord Lucan' mystery, but that hasn't happened. A genuine sense of grief extends far beyond Richey's immediate circles – for the loss of an important, original voice and presence within music and culture. Perhaps this could serve as a fitting quasi-epitaph. Richey Edwards: not just missing, but missed. ■ BARBARA ELLEN

► Barbara Ellen went to Thailand with the Manic Street Preachers for NME in 1994 and gave their debut album 'Generation Terrorists' 10/10

Early 1988

Having served as their driver and roadie, Richey joins Manic Street Preachers following the departure of original bassist Miles 'Flicker' Woodward. In June, the band record their debut single, 'Suicide Alley', featuring a Clash-inspired cover photographed by Richey, which is released in August. NME's Steven Wells will later award it single of the week.

▲ August 4, 1990

Manic Street Preachers' first NME interview, to coincide with the release of the 'New Art Riot' EP. Richey describes the band as being "the scum factor of the Mondays meets the guitar overload of Five Thirty/Ride while killing Birdland with politics," and warns that "we wanna be the biggest rock'n'roll nightmare ever and we wanna take the monarchy and the House Of Lords with us."

► September 27, 1990

The Manics sign to Heavenly Records. In an interview with Steven Wells a few months later, Richey claims that "every A&R man in London has come to see us and they hate us totally. They come up to us and tell us to learn to play our instruments. Don't they realise that we don't care? We're bored with all that! We don't want to live out their muso fantasies. They run around like headless chickens to sign the latest bunch of no-thinkers who successfully recreate 'The Dark Side Of The Moon'. They don't realise that every 14-year-old who comes to see us doesn't care that we sound awful. He goes home, sells his record collection and wants to burn down Barclays bank."

January 21, 1991

The Manics release 'Motown Junk', their first single for Heavenly, which charts at Number 94. In a *Melody Maker* interview, Nicky Wire declares that "we just wanna be the most important reference point of the '90s", but Richey doesn't sound quite so sure: "We are complete failures," he says. "We hate being where we are."

◀ May 15, 1991

During a post-gig interview with NME's Steve Lamacq at the Norwich Arts Centre, Edwards takes a razorblade and carves the words '4 REAL' into his left arm. He is rushed to hospital, where he receives 17 stitches. The next day, he clarifies his actions in a follow-up interview: "[Lamacq] saw us as hero-worshipping kids trying to replicate our favourite bands. There was no way I could change his mind. I didn't abuse him or insult him. I just cut myself. To show that we are no gimmick, that we are pissed off, that we're for real."

TIMELINE AND INTERVIEWS: BARRY NICOLSON

17 stitches

THE MANIC STREET PREACHERS were forced to cancel last week's Birmingham Barbet Organ gig following a bizarre incident in which Richey Edwards needed 17 stitches in his arm.

Towards the end of an interview with NME's Steve Lamacq (much of it concerned with the Manics' credibility, or lack of it, as a rock 'n' roll force), Edwards produced a razor blade and carved the word '4 REAL' into his left forearm. A paramedic then helped him to the hospital, where he received 17 stitches.



► February 10, 1992

The band's debut album, 'Generation Terrorists', is released, and receives a 10/10 from NME's Barbara Ellen. Talking about their rise to prominence, Richey tells *Melody Maker* that "we read all the classic rock books, which make everything out to be so fast. You're meant to explode overnight, but that never happens. If you want to be successful, you know what you've got to do: imitate The Wonder Stuff, dress a bit stupid, and get a support slot."



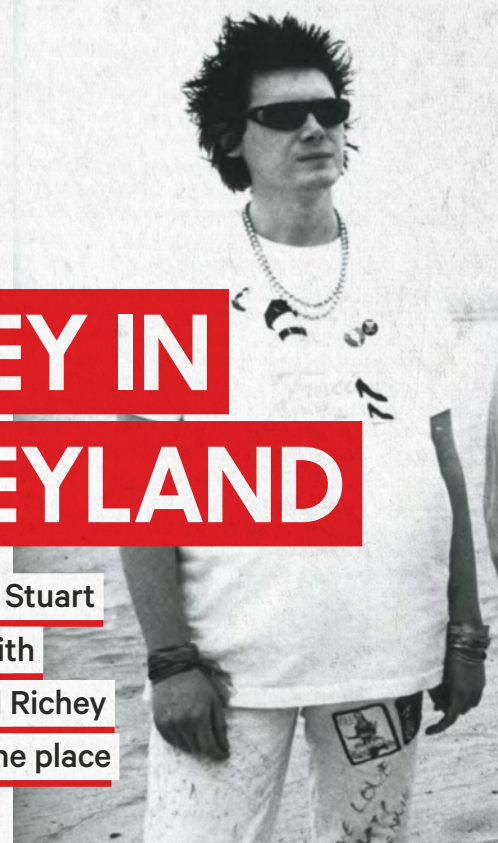
▼ May 30, 1992

'Generation Terrorists' reached Number 13 in the UK album chart on release in February and the Manics headed for America shortly after.

RICHEY IN DISNEYLAND

In May 1992, NME's Stuart Bailie went to LA with Manics, only to find Richey disillusioned with the place

PHOTO BY PENNIE SMITH



▲ July 29, 1991

Having signed to Columbia following an industry-wide scramble for their signature, the band release 'Stay Beautiful'. On the topic of signing to a major and the perception of the Manics as a hype band, Richey tells NME that "you people always think we're naive. The music industry is the easiest thing. There's all these little boys going around being scared by it, it's all gone wrong, the independent mentality of the press sums it up, they're all tossers."



► REMEMBERING RICHEY



STEVE LAMACQ

Famously, Richey carved the words '4 Real' into his arm during an interview with the DJ and NME writer after a show at Norwich Arts Centre

"I wish I'd met Richey in different circumstances, I really do. But by the time we got to Norwich the battle lines had been drawn. I was going there tasked with trying to get behind the rhetoric, while the Manics were – understandably – probably very suspicious of me after a veiled dig at them in *NME* a few weeks earlier. I just probably didn't understand them enough, or where they'd come from. But this – with the exception of one very uncomfortable journey in a lift a couple of months later – was the only time I met Richey. It's strange looking back at the night with the benefit of hindsight, because I don't think I – or even some of the people around him – had any idea what a complicated person he was. You read stories now about how troubled he was, but he seemed to hide it so well from strangers. He was enthusiastic and interesting in the bus on the way to the gig, but obviously frustrated by the interview afterwards. I always say that what haunts me were his deep, compelling eyes. And his softly spoken voice – really soft but slightly on edge – as he explained how important the band was to him. He was obviously a dynamo, a creative force. And he was obviously interested in the emotive power of rock'n'roll. All the things you admire in a musician. But unless you were really close to him, I don't think you probably ever saw the real depths and contradictions in his character."

Upstairs at The Rainbow, Sunset Strip, there's a nervy-looking guy wearing a fur coat, tennis shoes with purple laces and a pair of punky Sid shades. Maybe he's faking it, but his unhappy moanings make it sound like he's having the worst time of his life.

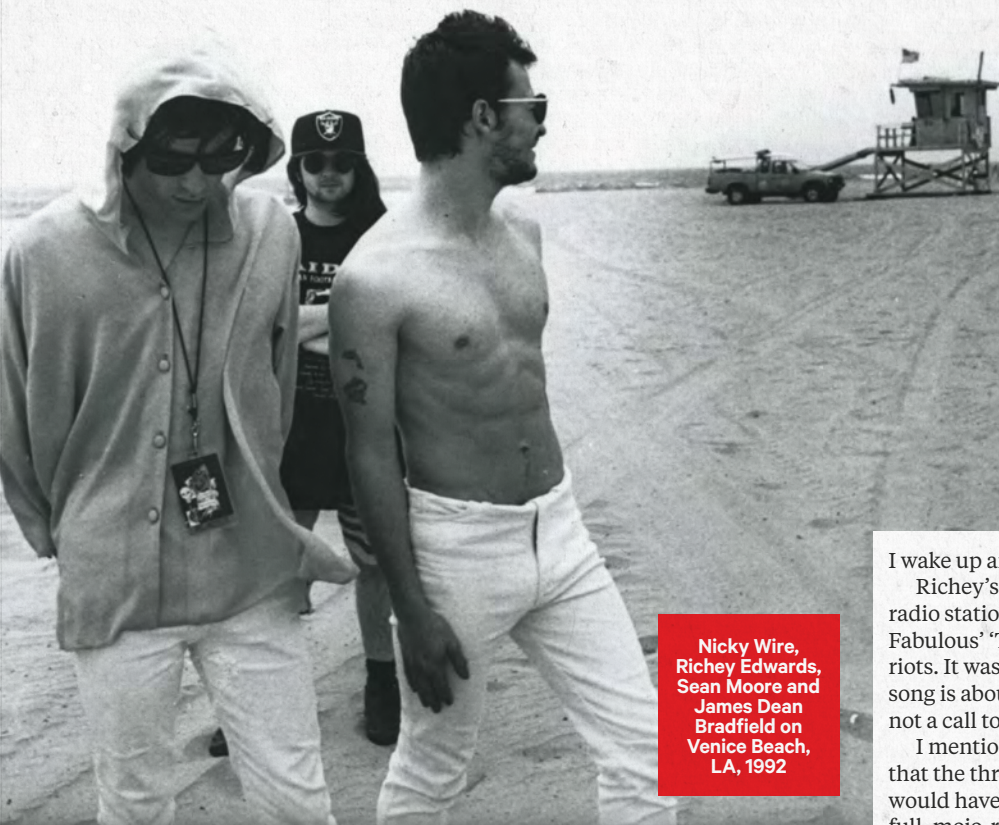
"I cannot believe it," bleats Nicky Wire. "I just went into the toilets and there it was, this 'Generation Terrorists' mat in the urinal, especially put there for tonight. That's really taking the piss, isn't it?"

A few of us trade sympathetic glances, but everybody else in The Rainbow is unfazed by this corruption of the group's baby manifesto. California's best liggers are too busy unloading pizzas and buckshee liquor to care that much; it's only when they dab their mouths with a Manic Street Preachers napkin (a replica of Richey's tattoo), or pocket an MSP bumper sticker (with Prague crucifix image) that there's any real sign of the motive behind this record company jolly at all.

During the evening, the Manics are asked to group together for a photo opportunity or to sign a poster (complete with huge *NME* quote) for one of the fur-toting wannabe babes. A radio plugger steps over to tell them that 'Motorcycle Emptiness' is the most added-to track on the metal stations, and that it's doing fantastically well on AOR radio, too. "The ultimate accolade," mouths Nicky, glazed and confused.

Over the PA system, James Dean Bradfield is singing about neon loneliness, while I'm watching the group's induction to Paradise City – how they're beginning to quantify their place on LA's main strip, to sample the hot splurge of speed, sex, scuzzzy rock lore and venal excess, and to measure that up to their own, ultra-critical value system. The Manics look pissed off and alienated already. Just the way they prefer it, probably.

"It's really fucked me up," Richey protests. "People just seem to want so much over here, they're not content with anything. I've been completely celibate on this tour. We could have fucked every night – in Europe and Britain we *did* – and in America I just haven't slept with anybody. It just doesn't interest me. Everything just seems for sale."



Nicky Wire, Richey Edwards, Sean Moore and James Dean Bradfield on Venice Beach, LA, 1992

"It's made me much more inward," Nicky says. "I haven't gone out at all. I've been reading more than I've done in the last three years. Every gig we've done, girls have brought us books, and I've become really insular – I've gone back to the days when I used to love Morrissey."

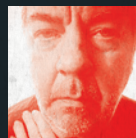
Pretty soon, though, the Manics could be enjoying masses of respect from this pariah, an eventuality that makes all of their moanings seem twisted and weirdly funny. The night I saw them play the Whiskey they were immense – a big, blamming show that left me all choked and proud. Their record company are awfully keen to accommodate them as well, even if they're not precisely au fait with these spiky polemics yet. Just a little more topspin, you feel, and the LA lot may take to this act like they've already gone for less interesting Joes like, say, Billy Idol and The Cult.

And then the Manics have to figure out if it's really worth having. As I unpool the memories of the band's final three days in America, that's where I remember the source of the drama lay – the painful wrestlings about scruples, the Manics' sadness for their fast-fading punky era, and the epic resolutions that still have some coinage in their controv-heavy career.

Daytime on Melrose Avenue, and Richey's just blown his wad on a bleached-out jacket and some postcards. One of the cards is a groovy take on the philosophy of Descartes – 'I Shop Therefore I Am'. Another one shows a Barbie doll fixed up in gold lamé, surrounded by consumer desirables. There's a speech bubble coming out of her mouth that reads: "Every morning



► REMEMBERING RICHEY



KEVIN CUMMINS

NME photographer who recently released the book *Assassinated Beauty*, a collection of classic shots he took of the band

"When I photograph musicians, I want them to look like stars. I want you, the reader, to put the photos on your bedroom walls. And so it always was with Richey. Richey was a star. Richey was also the bloke in the pub who could talk about sport, music, politics. Part of my role as a photographer is myth-making. When I spent a week with the Manics in Bangkok in '94 for NME, Richey wasn't the 24/7 tortured artiste. He played hard like the rest of the band and crew. I took some photos of him in the 'entertainment' district, where he looks like a little boy, lost in a world of mayhem. That wasn't the case, though. I wanted him to look vulnerable and directed the shots that way. The reality was he'd been in the pub for hours, watching the Manchester derby. Most bands would have stayed in the hotel until call time. Not the Manics. Not Richey. And I miss him to this day..."

I wake up and thank God for my unique ability to accessorise."

Richey's in chatty form, telling us how LA's alternative radio station, KROQ, played the Manics' 'Slash 'N' Burn' (and Fabulous' 'There's A Riot Going On') to commemorate the LA riots. It was especially disturbing, Richey says, because their song is about third-world economics and deforestation policies, not a call to arms.

I mention how I'd expected the band to be more animated, that the throbbing, sexy rush they'd affected so well in Britain would have empowered its way over here, vindicating itself in full, mojo-rising effect on Sunset Boulevard. Yet Nicky's gone back to bed – he's "too feeble" – and Sean's not around. Richey says that he's already digested it all on TV, and that he's not so thrilled to catch America first hand. And then, of course, the civic unrest in New York, Toronto, San Francisco, LA – all towns the Manics have passed through – have acted as a horrible backdrop for their efforts. "It just puts it all into perspective," Nicky reckoned earlier, "being poxy British white kids in the heart of this grim nation of corporatism."

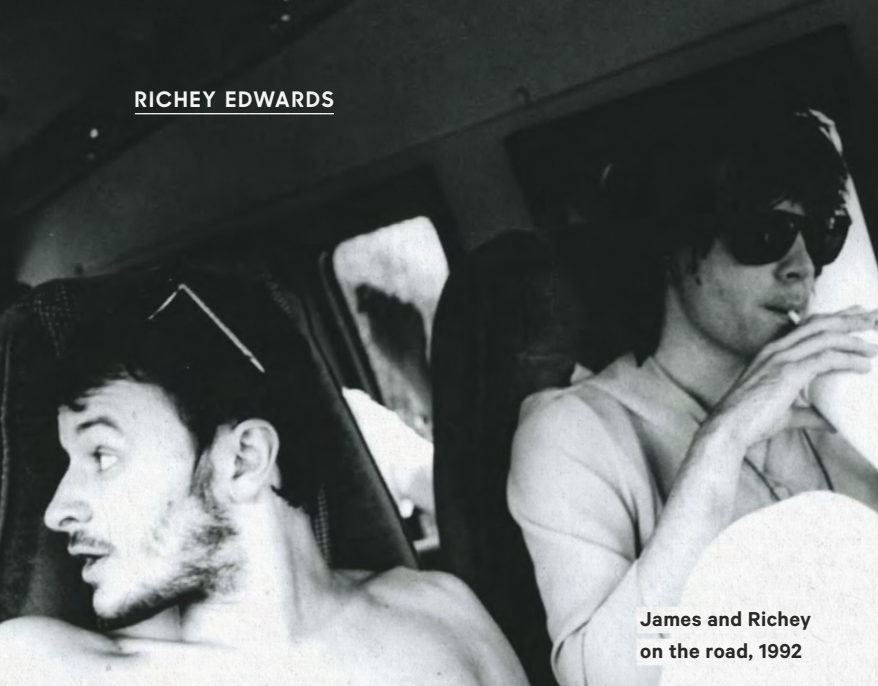
Wary of them repeating a Clash-pose-in-Belfast scenario, the Manics are happy to miss the wrecked buildings and check out the intact sections of town. So Richey's digging out books in Melrose about especially freaky Siamese children ("you'd make a fortune if you looked like that now"), rapping about serial killers, Red Hot Chili Peppers and Jane's Addiction, plus the footballing fortunes of Luton Town. The only shop that's been done over on this avenue is a branch of the London shop, Boy. "At least the looters had a bit of taste," Richey supposes.

As we turn into Bleecker Bob's record store, there's a welcoming blast of 'Generation Terrorists' and James is already looking anxious. But Richey has found the British

rock press – only a week old – and he gets wrapped up in the gossip that he's been missing on tour. A shopkeeper realises who it is. "Hey, how are ya, Richey! Are ya lookin' after that arm of yours?"

Next thing, I realise that James is legging it out of the shop, throwing weird, panicky shapes as he breaks for the door. I'm confused. Richey is giggling oddly inside, nodding to my left. A bloke from behind the counter has just whipped out a copy of 'Suicide Alley' – the very first Manics' single. He'd asked James to sign the cover and the singer bolted instead.

"Where the fuck did you get that?" says ➔



James and Richey
on the road, 1992

Richey, overcome with laughter. "There were only 300 of these pressed. Look at Sean on the cover – he looks about 12 there!"

So what's with James' dramatic exit?

"Well, he's such a perfectionist that he can't bear to think of those early singles. Ask him about 'New Art Riot' and he'll talk to you for a couple of seconds and then walk away. That's the way he is."

It's just gone midday at the hotel and Richey's fixing to eat a plate of sushi ("I don't want this, but you've just got to do it, haven't you? That's why this country is so messed up"). Nicky is playing Mr Sensible, sipping pure orange and tugging at his Traci Lords T-shirt, saying how she's meeting up with them soon for a video for the lovely 'Little Baby Nothing'.

The sight of the Glamour Twins without their pan-stick throws you a bit, but then so does the realisation that these are likeable, clued-in, expressive people. I start to remember the good things I've heard about their personal dealings – how they gave Jeff Barrett of Heavenly Records a cut of the LP profits because he'd helped them early on, or how they'd helped to get Caffy, their indie promotions friend, a good job with the management company when they signed their big deal. All positive accounts, no hint of a self-serving rock-monster lifestyle. So let's talk about values for a minute, Nicky.

"Lester Bangs said that pure rock'n'roll music can lead to a better life. In an abstract way, it just does. It gives you clues about life, literature and everything. That's a naïve thought, but I will believe it."

Richey: "Our lives haven't changed at all. They're just better. We were really pissed off before, but at least something made a bit of sense. You could relate to it."

One of the hopes that the Manics always seemed to uphold was that there was a shiny possibility of finding glamour beyond your normal, cruddy lifestyle. How does that go down with the Los Angeles experience?

Richey: "They only bands that ever interested us were traditional rock bands like The Clash and a lot more glam-rock bands like Guns N' Roses. But we were never interested in moving to LA, buying a Harley, cruising up and down, singing songs about girls and sniffing cocaine off beautiful models."

"That was all crap – the thing that offended us about rock

music was that they would never try to have any sensitivity or *soul*. It was all just enough to go out and go, 'Fuck me, fuck me, fuck me', and that was the thing that people got wrong about us from the start."

The thing I liked the most about the early Manics gigs was the theatre, uncertainty and dissent – people weren't sure what the band was about, and how to react. Much of that's gone now. Instead you've got a *consensus*, like at the last big Astoria show in London. It was fun but everybody knew exactly how to behave...

Richey: "The difference is that we're the only band in London that gets accused of something like that, because no other band is putting demands upon themselves. If any other band did a show in a place like the Astoria no-one would question why it should be better. Everyone loved the show, but they expected more, which is good."

In New York, though, you went for the blow-out, mouthing off about how the only good thing about the town was that it killed John Lennon...

Nicky: "We still get mouthy, but where the situation is right. If we're actually enjoying a concert, and we think it's going well, I never really think about it – it's a bit of a fake if you're mouthing off. In New York, everyone was just so brain dead, it was just the right thing to do."

Is there any reason to guess that the Manics are already having a bearing on the greater scheme of things?

Richey: "In terms of something explosive, I don't think it will happen. People just aren't interested any more. They're too selfish."

Nicky: "We've made indie bands realise that they can be stars again. You've got all these bands like The Verve, Suede, you know that they've realised you can be a star again, and that's all down to us. Musically and lyrically, they're not gonna take anything from us. I know that – they're too scared."

Like I said, the Whiskey gig was such a thing: joyful and rowdy, while the activated rumble of James' Les Paul filled the place out with masses of greatness and anxiety and vim. Stuff your spiky associations, the Manics are now a terrific *rock'n'roll* band...

The taped intro was a fine idea; the sound of Allen Ginsberg in a stoned-out rendition of his poem 'Howl', the

► REMEMBERING RICHEY



ANDY CAIRNS

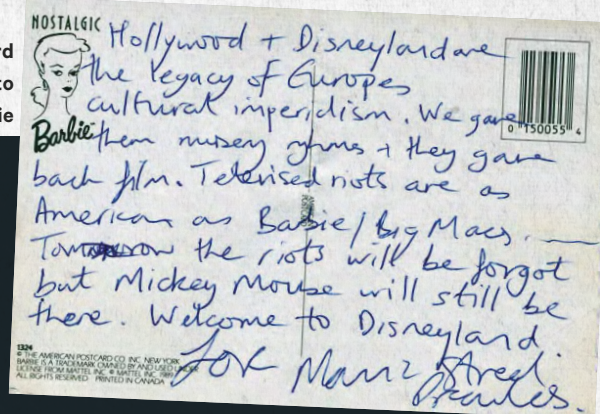
Lead singer of Northern Irish rockers Therapy?, who toured with the Manics in 1994.

"I met him for the first time at the Kilburn National in 1992 – that infamous show where they made those comments about Freddie Mercury and Michael Stipe. Therapy? had been around since 1989, so we'd bumped into a few so-called rock'n'roll characters, and they were always such bores, but Richey was charming, sweet and fiercely intelligent. I was struck by how civil and decent he was. When we took them on tour in September 1994, I'd heard rumours about what was happening to him, but he didn't seem any different to me. I bumped into him outside a venue one night. I had a couple of books under my arm and one of them was *Dark Eros: The Imagination Of Sadism* by Thomas Moore. He took great interest in it, so I let him borrow it, and later he gave me a small booklet of writings by William Blake and *Elegy Written In A Country Churchyard* by Thomas Gray, which he signed 'Love, Richey'. My favourite memory is of the night after Therapy? played The Forum in London in 1993, when James and Richey came. He was in good spirits and we had such a laugh: we just sat and talked about books and life in general. It was completely un-rock'n'roll."

The band take in
the Disneyland
resort, California



The postcard
Richey wrote to
Stuart Bailie



► REMEMBERING RICHEY



STUART BAILIE

NME writer who reported on the Manics' first US tour
"Richey Edwards was

an astonishing prospect in the early days. Women's blouses and spraypaint, Cacharel fragrance and Boots cosmetics. It was the last days of Madchester and everyone else wore sweatpants and baggy shirts. But Richey was radiant like Liz Taylor, quoting existentialist writers, getting maximum value from his library card. The Manics were fearless and self-contained. They refused to shake the outstretched hands of lesser indie bands.

"I followed them to Los Angeles in 1992 and Richey was excellent company. Sure, he

ramped up his persona for interviews, but he was also an affable soul. He liked his darts, his shopping and he could do a passable moonwalk. He was indiscreet about other band members, and when he slagged off some music-biz chancer, his voice relished every withering syllable.

"But Richey was already grieving for a failed mission. They were supposed to have sold 16 million copies of the first record before self-combusting. Now they were planning a second album. And while the other Manics were growing outside of the band, getting rounded lives, Edwards became solitary and self-obsessed. In his mind, he had failed. By 1994 he was a wreck. He had completely changed his body shape due to a daily regime of 1,500 sit-ups and neat vodka. When I met him in September he had just exited The Priory after a binge of cutting and mental disintegration. The voice was quieter,

the humour more bleak and he was wearing a girl's coat that he'd bought in Fishguard.

"There was some steel in Richey's character, though. While he couldn't forgive how much he'd messed up the band, he insisted he was going to play guitar better and wouldn't give any countenance to the talk of suicide. You wanted to believe him, but when he took us for a ride in his silver Cavalier, Kurt Cobain was on his car stereo, singing 'Rape Me'."

hipster apocalypse from '56. A useful context for taking in 'Stay Beautiful' and 'Democracy Coma' or more especially when 'Repeat' goes veering off into a steal from Dead Kennedy's 'California Über Alles' – they've an excellent sense of occasion, these boys.

Like he does, James rips off his shirt and you see his abdominals all bunched up tight; partly nerves and also down to his obsessive road-training programme. If he's Marlon Brando in *A Streetcar Named Desire* – all inarticulate shrugs and animal reflexes – then Nicky is Blanche DuBois, a Southern (Welsh)

Belle, flouncing around in a Kylie shirt, ripping up a feather pillow near the end and transforming the Whiskey into a mad, fluffy landscape. A classy act.

My solitary moan is that they don't do 'Motorcycle Emptiness', the Manics' new single and epic discourse on the myth of speed and the loneliness of the human lot.

"At the end of the day, 'Motorcycle Emptiness' is just one of the best records of the year – more than anyone ever expected from us, and that song is four years old. We never played it early on; when you're jumping up and down at the Rock Garden you're not gonna do something like that, really," says Nicky. "We don't want to play it live until we can do it perfectly. We are a perfectionist band."

After the show we turn back up the strip to The Rainbow, where Richey will pass out on a table and I end up sitting next to Sean, the drummer, the first Manic I ever met.

That was at an especially unhappy party two years ago, when I was set on by a band whose LP I'd (deservedly) slagged off in the paper. I'd been cornered in the toilets and threatened with violence, and I felt rotten. Then Sean came over and started talking about burning down the universe and stuff, and how all the other bands were shite anyway. He made me feel better. I got inspired again.

I don't get that vibe off him now, sadly. His physical appearance (like Steve Earle on a rough day) and body language all suggest that he's feeling miffed with his situation, and is storing up all those bad vibes. Not good.

The other Manics seem a little put out by his hermit style (they aren't healthy outgoing sorts either!), but they reckon that Sean doesn't need to be around people at all. Richey takes an old American Indian line from Carlos Castaneda: "Those who speak do not know, and those who know do not speak."

Sean tells me that he was much happier working in the recording studio in Sussex – a time that Nicky also calls "the golden era". There was a lot more control then, says Sean, a freedom from "all the bullshit". The band were able to regain their self-sufficient drift and be creative like never before. Now it's all dispersing, he says, his arms scooping in the air, drawing graphs of band potential versus the reality of it all; ideals nosing downwards under the influence of the Yankee dollar.

Earlier, Richey had been talking about the fun times in the past, driving to London in the Transit, having two-day arguments about whether the indie band McCarthy was somehow more ideologically correct than Guns N' Roses. They were always trading ideas, forming declarations.

"Now you get in the van, and it's four people with Walkmans, Sega games, just sitting like that. An existential nightmare!"

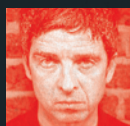
In Barney's Beanery, where Janis Joplin once twatted Jim Morrison over the head with a Southern Comfort bottle, the Manics are chilling out, trying to make sense of their last full day in California.

We'd been to Venice Beach, now patrolled by squaddies from the Peace Corps – against *what*, we weren't sure. Afterwards, an appearance at a TV studio in Anaheim developed into a mad photo session around the corner in Disneyland, with the band

strolling around in fake jungle clearings wearing plastic Hawaiian leis. And we noticed how all of the attendants looked so perfect, almost phoney, before we took blasts on the ghost train and the truly wiggly star ride (imagine a rollercoaster in a planetarium on drugs) and generally had a good time in an ideologically suspect sort of way.

Now Richey's fretting about all that stuff, and the ride back to the

► REMEMBERING RICHEY



NOEL GALLAGHER

Hung out with Richey in the early '90s

"I met him a couple of times. I first met him at a Sony Records party in '94 maybe, and he loved Oasis. I loved that tune 'You Love Us', and I loved that video as well. He was a quiet lad, but obviously there was a lot of shit going on inside. But he was a bit of a dude, all those lads are. I don't know the drummer that well, but James and Nicky are amazing people. It was a bit of a shock at the time – he kind of missed out on the Manics' greatest moment, 'A Design For Life' and that period."



► REMEMBERING RICHEY



TRACI LORDS

Former porn star who was asked by Richey to sing on the single 'Little Baby Nothing'

"He reminded me of a young David

Bowie: very avant-garde, and there was something quite feminine about him. He was very soft-spoken, and struck me as being vulnerable, almost birdlike. He definitely came across as someone who was living in a glass house, in some sort of fragile state. I thought he was lovely. He never spoke to me about why he wanted me to sing on 'Little Baby Nothing' – it wasn't until later that I read his reasons for it. It's funny, because I saw Richey as someone who was very vulnerable, and that's how he saw me. We ended up being perfectly in sync with each other. There's a picture of us on the inside sleeve of 'Generation Terrorists' – I'm wearing a leopard-print coat and the band are all around me. That photo session was quick – no stylist, make-up artist or anything – so we were all horsing around. Then the sky opened and it poured down, and I remember Richey running down the street, screaming and being silly. It was a very fun, frivolous, innocent afternoon."

hotel that took us past the outskirts of Compton, another kind of famous adventure park. The whole Disney trip is a lousy cultural swap, he decides at last, with Europe giving the Americans Fritz Lang and Hollywood repaying the compliment with a cartoon mouse.

Richey tries his first tequila slammer, likes it, and is on to a new, stranger riff. One of his fave artists, he says, is Van Gogh, who had this thing about perfect circles – how there's some awesome symbolic value in that.

"The only perfect circle on a human body is the eye," he explains. "When a baby is born, it's so perfect, but when it opens its eyes, it's just blinded by the corruption and everything else is a downward spiral. You can't draw a perfect circle, but you can put a man on the moon – really bizarre!"

Soon we're all drawing crap circles on our beer mats, and I sneak a long look at this squiffy assembly. Sean is quiet, and is planning to go back with Nicky, who feels unwell. James, who has been threatening to punch out this enormous long-hair at the pool table (he's twice James' height), has calmed a little, and is now sticking with us, poking his buddies in the absence of any spoken words.

The Manics are a very physical band, always reassuring each other, which is nice. James is king of the touching; the singer is last sighted practically on top of his manager's shoulders, massaging his neck and feeling the bumps on top of his head. I feel like I'm part of a David Attenborough film.

Then Richey has an allergic reaction to the tequila and he starts to go pink, and then swells up. His arm just inflates, and presently you're looking at something that's stranger than anything out of a Cronenberg fantasy, as the letters 4 REAL start to rise out of Richey's forearm. And afterwards you start looking at his right arm, and that's queer too: burns, scrapes, slices, lesions – a lurid pink testimony to a sustained programme of self-mutilation. "What?" says Richey calmly, looking up from his circles. "Oh, they're just my war wounds."

So is there any truth in the theory that people who damage themselves on purpose are trying to externalise some awful, inner pain?

"I dunno if that's true, I've always found it hard to express how I feel, even when I was a little child. It's a very British emotion – they keep things bottled up inside them. Some more than others."

The Manics are ready for the morning flight to Japan – to binge out on Sega software and to compensate for those celibate American nights.

Richey has a present for me. He passes over the Barbie doll postcard he got on Melrose two days before. On the other side he's written some of the things he wanted to say about Disneyland last night, but couldn't quite express.

Here's what it says: "Hollywood and Disneyland are the legacy of Europe's cultural imperialism. We gave them nursery rhymes and they gave back film. Televised riots are as American as Barbie/Big Macs. Tomorrow the riots will be forgotten but Mickey Mouse will still be there. Welcome to Disneyland. Love, Manic Street Preachers."

And you thought they were just a Mickey Mouse band? ■

A MANIC LIFE CONT...

DON'T GIVE

► Suffering 'nervous exhaustion' and anorexia, RICHEY JAMES was admitted to a psychiatric hospital three weeks ago, marking a pivotal – maybe even final – chapter in the MANIC STREET PREACHERS story. KEITH CAMERON finds JAMES DEAN BRADFIELD and NICKY WIRE struggling to understand their friend's self-destructive behaviour in the wake of recording their third album, 'The Holy Bible'. Manics Canon-bed: STEVE DOBBIE

The picture is no more than three-and-a-half years old, yet the four faces have changed so much they seem only vaguely familiar now.



▲ July 30, 1994

The band play T In The Park without Richey, who – following an apparent suicide attempt earlier in the month – has been checked into the Priory clinic. Their management are forced to release a statement denying rumours that he has quit the band. In an interview with NME's Keith Cameron a few weeks later, a visibly shaken Nicky Wire says that "it came to a point where his self-abuse had reached a peak, in a lot of ways – his drinking, he'd virtually become anorexic, his mutilation. Everybody just got really scared when we saw him. We're in a position where we don't know what to do." On August 29, two days after they play Reading Festival as a three-piece, 'The Holy Bible' is released, and his weight becomes a serious problem.

"If it ever comes to the point where Richey's not coming back we won't continue. It's impossible to say what will happen. It's just a wait." – Nicky

"Yes" is the Manics' TSB song, their acknowledgment that things went too far. "I never thought it was. But on top of everything else it probably had more to do with it."

► April 22, 1994

Manic Street Preachers play the first of two shows at MBK Hall in Bangkok, Thailand, where they are joined by NME's Barbara Ellen. In a fascinating interview, Richey talks openly about his self-harm: "When I cut myself I feel so much better. All the little things that might have been annoying me suddenly seem so trivial because I'm concentrating on the pain. I'm not the sort of person who can scream and shout, so this is my only outlet. It's all done very logically."

"The only people who are disturbed by Richey cutting himself are those who don't know him. They don't understand... We do know him, we do understand."

▼ June 14, 1993

The Manics release their second album, 'Gold Against The Soul'. Richey admits to NME's John Harris that he had been drinking heavily during its writing and recording, but refutes the suggestion that he is an alcoholic. "Someone like Shane MacGowan is an alcoholic: someone who gets up, drinks first thing in the morning, and drinks all day. I'm not interested in that. I want to get... I want to forget about things when it starts getting dark. It's pretty impossible to sleep unless you've taken something, otherwise you just lie in your bed and think about everything and it goes on and on."





25 February 1995 80p 5(US)3.95

MISSING: the police hunt for RICHEY MANIK

Manics' Richey Edwards disappears

Three-week police hunt turns up abandoned car

▲ February 25, 1995

Police find his his car abandoned near the Severn Bridge two weeks later. Nicky Wire tells NME that, "If Richey does not want to come back then that is fine. We just want him to give us a call. We are genuinely worried. He has never disappeared like this before."

February 1, 1995

On the eve of a US promo trip, Richey checks out of his London hotel with more than £2,000 in cash, drives back to his flat in Cardiff and is never seen again. The following day, his manager Martin Hall files a missing persons report.

January 23, 1995

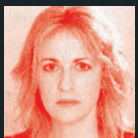
Richey gives his final interview, to Midori Tsukagoshi of Japanese magazine *Music Life*. In it, he talks about his hospitalisation the previous summer, his cynicism towards relationships, the satisfaction he gets from songwriting and his "respect" for Yukio Mishima, a Japanese author who committed ritual suicide. "People say to the mentally ill, 'You know so many people think the world of you,'" he tells Tsukagoshi. "But when they don't like themselves they don't notice anything. They don't care about what people think of them. When you hate yourself, whatever people say it doesn't make sense. 'Why do they like me? Why do they care about me? Because you don't care about yourself at all.'"

▲ September 20, 1994

Having checked himself out of The Priory, Richey rejoins the band for an 11-date French tour, supporting Therapy?. His return to the British stage comes the following month at Glasgow's Barrowland, where NME's Paul Moody writes that "he's almost impossibly distant – gamine-eyed and crushingly shy – seemingly overcome by the idea of going onstage in front of 1,600 people desperate to stare at him and wonder if he's really OK".



► REMEMBERING RICHEY



RACHEL ELIAS

Richey's sister

"Richard was two years older than me. We went to the same school together – he would always help me with my

homework. His favourite programme, right up until he went missing, was *Match Of The Day*.

"When he joined the band, they would come to our house to rehearse in my mum and dad's garage, and I went to one of their first gigs, at Radcliffe's Square Club in Cardiff, where there were only three or four of us in the audience.

"I wasn't surprised when the band became successful, because Richard was always so forceful about what he wanted to do. Even if he couldn't play guitar, that wasn't relevant to their appeal – he wrote letters to numerous journalists and record companies, laying out the band's vision, and he was so clear about what he wanted to do that it almost seemed kind of inevitable when it actually happened. Ironically, they only became really big after he went missing – when he was in hospital in Cardiff a few months before, nobody even knew who he was. But the albums he made with the band speak for themselves.

"If you read a basic description of Richard on Wikipedia, it always opens up by saying 'He suffered from...' and then there's this series of labels that follows: alcoholism, anorexia, etc, etc. But he was never treated, or even formally diagnosed, with any of those things.

"Over the last 20 years, there's been this force perpetuating that it was the case, but when he went into hospital, he was never treated for anorexia nervosa. He was never treated for alcoholism. Admittedly, he did experience depression and his self-harming was a symptom of that. But I feel like Richard's been put in this box – possibly because he's a rock star and he's been missing for so long – and it's somehow easier for people to think those things about him.

"The Cult Of Richey has snowballed to the extent that people have decided what he must be like, and he's not here to respond to the assumptions they make about him. They say, for example, that he took out £200 in cash every day for 10 or 11 days in the lead-up to his disappearance. That's true – but what never gets reported is that when he left his wallet behind, along with his passport and his medication, we found receipts accounting for almost every single one of those days – he spent that money. He spent it on clothes and CDs, but the suggestion is always that he was storing it in preparation to disappear. It's a good example of the myth that's been built up around his story, to the point where it's become a story in itself.

"I'd hate it if all Richard was remembered for was stuff like the self-harming incident in NME, because he was much, much more than that. I'd like him to be remembered for more positive things."

► Rachel Elias has recorded the song 'I Miss You' with fellow members of the Missing People Rock Choir. All proceeds will go to missingpeople.org.uk

LET ENGLAND WATCH



This week PJ Harvey wraps recording on her ninth album, crafted under the public's curious gaze in the basement of London's Somerset House. Laura Snapes spent a week witnessing the political record take shape

PHOTO: SEAMUS MURPHY

On the walls of the room where PJ Harvey is recording her ninth studio album are lyrics for eight songs, typed out and covered in neat handwritten notes: "Photos that go with this". "Beautiful, simple, ambient". "For chain letter project, Feb 2012". The page for one song, 'UN High Commission For Refugees In The Field', features a long list of rhymes – "true, Jude, multitude... blood, mud, enough" and so on – that's somehow reassuring; even the only artist to win the Mercury Prize twice has to use rhymezone.com sometimes.

Visiting the Recording In Progress studio five times in one week, the development of the follow-up to 2011's seminal 'Let England Shake' can be tracked by the dwindling number of sherbet lemons in producer Flood's sweetshop-sized jar. You gradually glean that multi-instrumentalist John Parish tends to be the butt of the band's good-humoured jokes. One morning, Flood [Mark Ellis] is complaining of an ache. "We're old gits!" says Polly, who is 45 and released her debut single 24 years ago. "I've twisted my ankle, so I'm hobbling, and John forgot where he was this morning!"

There is total transparency, nowhere to hide. The writing is literally on the wall – except it's not, really, because no matter how long anyone spends watching French drummer Jean-Marc Butty try different sticks, or Parish attempting to nail a beat, it's impossible to be any the wiser as to how exactly this record will shape up. But that's all part of the privileged thrill (£15 a pop, meaning the weekday crowd skews older) of witnessing this usually very private process: it's all in the shaping up rather than the finished product, the thousand tiny banal micro-decisions (like Harvey realising, "I think my tambourine's wrong, it should be the other

way around") that will inform one of the year's most anticipated records.

The people behind Recording In Progress – Harvey herself, along with Michael Morris, co-director of Artangel, an organisation that commissions unusual art projects, and Somerset House director Jonathan Reekie – have all referred to it as a "sculptural object", which may require a certain amount of artistic sympathy to accept. The sessions are definitely beautiful: Morris recalls seeing an observer "gently sobbing", and the fannish thrill of watching PJ Harvey play both the saxophone and the fool doesn't get old. What Recording In Progress undoubtedly does is to offer a humanising comment on the value of music, something that's so easily fogged by endless

"YOU'RE LETTING IN THE MUSIC AND THE SURROUNDINGS"

PJ HARVEY

stats and conflicting information about Spotify royalties. It reminds us of the weeks of invisible labour that go into a 40-odd-minute record, however we may consume it.

In this case there has been even more labour than usual: Recording In Progress started taking shape about a year ago, when PJ Harvey approached Artangel with what Morris calls "the idea in embryonic form". The organisation were delighted; they had long wanted to work with Harvey because, says Morris, the former art student (who deferred and eventually lost her place to study at London's St Martins owing to the success of her 1993 debut, 'Dry') "approaches her work with the sensibility of a visual artist".

After Harvey and Morris finessed the idea, they approached Jonathan Reekie last October. He didn't hesitate to say yes. "I'm quite new at Somerset House," he says, "and I want to give it a much stronger cultural and artistic

identity, rethinking it not just as a great venue for presenting work, but also as a space where work is made. Having PJ Harvey come in to record her new album fits absolutely within that idea. And [hers was] a really extraordinary, intriguing and exciting idea."

Building the studio was a logistical challenge. Harvey had originally wanted to record inside a glass box, but the reverberations made it impossible. The audience hear an amplified version of what's going on inside the studio, but it was important that the sound didn't create a feedback loop – and that the band didn't disturb diners in the new restaurant upstairs. With the help of Somerset House's in-house project creators Something & Son, they designed a well-insulated wooden structure with a special acoustic seal, and decided that the musicians would wear radio mics so the audience could hear their every word. However, there's no escaping that we're in the basement of an 18th-century palace: it is freezing, so much so that the cold air contracts and detunes Harvey's silver baritone clarinet one morning. "It's flat!" she says, affecting a pout.

The finished studio is a square white room built inside the Inland Revenue's old gymnasium and shooting range, which was built as a practice space for one for the Prince Of Wales' Own Civil Service Rifles – a sort of tax-office Dad's Army – in World War I. (The 1,240 of them who died in conflict are memorialised outside Somerset House.) Two sides of the studio are open, offering a vantage point for the groups of 35 people that descend to the basement every other hour. A special vinyl covering on the windows means that the band cannot see us – despite the unnerving moments when a musician seems to catch your eye while staring into middle distance – but we can get close enough to see the gap in John Parish's teeth as he and the other male ➔

musicians repeat the refrain in the martial snare of 'Guilty', which recounts a drone attack as witnessed through a grainy surveillance screen: "What's he doing with that stick?/ Which one is guilty?" A heraldic PJ Harvey crest featuring a goat and a two-headed dog, a beast that also recurs in her sketches, are pinned on the wall around Flood's computer. Parish's partner Michelle Henning designed the crest, which may form a part of the album artwork.

Some reporters were certain that the musicians knew when the audience were present and adjusted their behaviour accordingly, but Michael Morris insists that's not the case. There's no reason to believe otherwise: there doesn't appear to be a clock in the room outside of Flood's computer. A song provisionally called 'Ministry Of Social Affairs' is built around a leery old blues song, Jerry McCain & His Upstarts' 'That's What They Want', whose refrain – "Money, honey/ That's what they want/ Oh yeah" – Polly sings through an alien vocal effect, matching her swaggering tone with unselfconscious, vampy moves that make her band crack up. Towards the end of the session when they work on 'Guilty', Flood's assistant Rob Kirwan uses the computer to fix a vocal chant around a tricky beat that they've spent an hour trying to match. "We don't even have to sing it again," says Flood. "Unless we feel it's in the spirit of the thing." Everyone laughs, but that's as close as they get to knocking on the fourth wall.

Harvey was interested in Somerset House "because of its resonance", she tells Morris in an interview in the event's programme. The rifle range, the various offices contained within, Oliver Cromwell laying in state there after the English Civil War; the fact that it's built from Portland stone and her father owns a quarry that mines the stuff: "All that history will fuel me and help tap into a different level of consciousness," she said. "When you're making music with other people in a space, you connect on a very primal level



PJ DESCRIBES ONE SONG AS "A BIT LIKE TWIN PEAKS"

in a musical conversation, communicating emotionally and musically. There's very little barrier and you're not only letting in the other musicians and the music, but also the surroundings and being open to everything that's ever gone on in and around the space."

But "everything that's ever gone on in and around the space" – all the British pomp and splendour – seems to be one of Harvey's targets on a record that focuses on British and US home and foreign policy and its effect on civilian life. Where 'Let England Shake' was focused largely on WWI's disastrous Gallipoli Campaign, Harvey's ninth record was inspired by her trips to Washington DC, Kosovo and Afghanistan with photographer Seamus Murphy (who is in the studio too).

There is a pointed duality to the way in which the record addresses conflict and the corruption of various regimes: first-world governments don't just commit atrocities abroad. On 'UN High Commission For Refugees In The Field', she sings, "How to stop the murdering?/ By now we should have learned", while 'Ministry Of Social Affairs'

offers a grim indictment of modern London: "A million beggars' silhouettes/ Near where the money changers sit/ By their locked cabinets".

There is a preoccupation with what happens in the aftermath of communities decimated by government action, too: the attacks in 'Guilty' and 'The Revolving Wheel' bring to mind images of ravaged Middle Eastern war zones, but two other songs point out that America is just as guilty of displacing and disenfranchising entire populations. 'Sight Seeing, South Of The River' documents Hope VI, the US' flawed project to clear out and replace dilapidated social housing – and not always with the same number of residences; 'River Anacostia' offers comfort to a now-predominantly African-American district in Washington DC that was segregated by the construction of a freeway.

Radicalisation – or at least more barbarism – is an inevitable aftermath of these horrors, the lyrics seem to say. 'Imagine This' is sung from the perspective of a child who has seen their father and brother killed in front of them, leading them to declare: "Now I hate everyone/ Before I used to love all people".

It seems incongruous given the subject matter, but in one session at the end of January, Harvey was worried that one song was becoming too dirgey. "I want them to remain as singalong-y as possible," she told the band. "I tried so hard to make them catchy when I was writing them. That's my masterplan."

If there was one gripe to be had about 'Let England Shake', it was that the sexual menace had gone out of Harvey's voice and performance – not that it would have been wildly appropriate, but along with 2007's ghostly 'White Chalk', it gave the impression that the swaggering PJ Harvey fans had fallen in love with early on had been put away. From these sessions, it seems that she is putting more of herself in the songs again: the whoops, snarls and bloody licked lips last witnessed on her 2009 collaboration with Parish, the excellent 'A Woman A Man Walked By', are back, and as arresting as ever – more so for seeing them up close. The overall sound will be brassier than 'Let England Shake', whose palette often seemed to match the battlefields it documented. At one point Harvey says a song is "a bit like *Twin Peaks*, which I like".

It's tedious when talented female artists are characterised as alien beings because we don't know how else to contextualise their achievements. But there is something extremely curiosity-sating about seeing Harvey in what Jonathan Reekie accurately describes as a "domestic" situation. Her internal life hasn't been the focal point of her work for several years, so watching her drink tea in her all-black uniform takes on an intimate resonance. What's most interesting is watching her collaborate: where Flood is verbose, Harvey offers pointed encouragement from behind a placid smile. After all, she's the only one who knows exactly how this will all turn out. ■

WHO'S WHO IN PJ HARVEY'S BAND

A survey of her hyper-connected musicians

John Parish

A key collaborator who has recorded LPs with Polly alone (2009's 'A Man A Woman Walked By') and is also a noted solo artist and producer.

Mick Harvey

A composer and former member of The Birthday Party and The Bad Seeds.

Terry Edwards

He plays brass on PJ's ninth album, though he's a multi-instrumentalist who has played with everyone from Beck to Marianne Faithfull.

Enrico Gabrielli

The Italian multi-instrumentalist has played with Muse, Daniel Johnston and Faith No More's Mike Patton.

Alessandro Stefana

An Italian polymath and member of Mike Patton's band Modocane.

Jean-Marc Butty

The French drummer has played with

PJ Harvey for years, as well as The Raincoats and Calexico among others.

Kendrick Rowe

Rowe is a reggae and jazz musician who has worked with Courtney Pine, Joss Stone, Aswad and more.

Mike Smith

A composer for film and TV and a collaborator in Blur and many of Damon Albarn's musical projects.

Alain Johannes

Since his band Eleven called it day, Johannes has produced records for Brody Dalle, Mark Lanegan and more.



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STROKES OF

This week, the guy who produced The Strokes' early records hits the UK for a speaking tour. Jamie Fullerton gave Gordon Raphael a call to get a taste of the band's glory years

PHOTOS BY COLIN LANE AND GORDON RAPHAEL

The Modern Age

Rough Trade, 2001



"I had a studio, Transporterraum [in New York]; I'd go out to clubs hustling bands and say, 'Hey, I've got a little studio down the street.' It was on that kind of mission that I saw a gig at Lunar Lounge: a free show with two bands. I thought The Strokes were cool, they had a lot of presence, but they were my second favourite band of the evening. I gave both my business card and said I had a studio two blocks from this club: 'Come by!'"

"Two days later, Albert Hammond Jr called. He said they had to make a demo to get their work in clubs, to go up from the free-admission ones to the next level."

"Albert was this young guy wearing these suits with tennis shoes, and there was Fab Moretti with his Coca-Cola shirts. Four energetic individuals walking into my studio with their equipment and one guy moping in, not very pleased to be there, carrying a case of beer. That was Julian. He'd stare at the ground, looking doomed."

"Julian had incredible talent: he was always trying a million different ideas. He did drink beer through the entire session, but nothing could escape his view. He said: 'We want it to sound like you just took a trip to the future and discovered an old record from the past you never heard before.'"

"They also said they wanted to sound like nothing that's being recorded right now. At that time every producer was knocking themselves out on Pro Tools. So I said, 'OK guys, all go into that little room, pick up your instruments and play just like you play every day. That's something not being done today.'"

"At the end of recording the look on Julian's face was like, 'You know, there were a lot of other ideas that I could have tried that might have been stronger.'"

"I figured they'd press up a few CDs of the demo and go from club to club. Later I bumped into Albert in his little suit with a box under his arm: 'Hey Gordon,

check out the artwork.' He showed me this artwork for 'The Modern Age'. He was going up and down record stores on St Mark's Place asking if they would take copies."

"The next day I saw a guy who was an A&R intern at RCA. I said, 'Hey Dave, come on down to the studio.' The first thing I played him was 'The Modern Age'. He was looking around, not interested. The next song comes on, 'Last Nite'. He said, 'Play me that first song again! Can I take this to my boss?' RCA signed them outside the UK."

"Next thing I know, I read in the *NME* that The Strokes are touring. I got a call from Albert: 'Hey Gordon, check out the *NME*, the demo is record of the week.' Then the headlines are 'Radiohead and Kate Moss seen in the audience watching The Strokes'."

"They came back to New York and played a residency at the Mercury Lounge. In his boozy way Julian looks at me, hugging me, and says, 'Gordon, aren't you happy as hell that we're doing so well right now? Don't you wish like hell you'd made a contract with us? You're not getting anything from these records we're selling.'"

"It's true, I didn't make them sign anything. I said, 'You fucking asshole, get out of here.'"



Is This It

Rough Trade, 2001



"After the Mercury Lounge residency, I went to dinner with Julian at the 7A restaurant. He told me, 'We know we're doing quite well with this

'Modern Age' EP, but our label in England, Rough Trade, wants us to do an album and they have a producer they want us to work with: Gil Norton.'"

"Gil Norton had just finished with Foo Fighters. Julian says, 'If you tell me you're a better producer than him, we'll use you for the album.' I said, 'I cannot say I'm a better producer than Gil Norton.' Our food arrived and Julian stood up and said, 'Fuck you, Gordon, because you said you're not a better producer and now I have to go and use Gil Norton.' He left me with two plates of food."

"I got a call a few months later, and it was Julian: 'Hey Gordon, do you still have that basement studio?' Yeah, of course. 'Would you be willing to record our album? Gil recorded a few things and that's not our sound.'"

"Around May, they came to my studio and brought piles of records, I remember Guided By Voices and The Cars. We had a listening session and planned a seven-week recording project."

GENIUS



The Strokes in the UK after performing 'Last Nite' at the Brit Awards, 2002

"I had entered a relapse into my marijuana days, so I was smoking pot all day long, and several of the band members were joining me. Several of the band were drinking beers, but nobody was doing lines of cocaine on the mixing table, no-one was passed out.

"The guy from their American label RCA came into the studio. He asked the band to fire me. We went to Sterling Sound mastering studio and worked with the head of that studio, who joined with the A&R man from RCA and delivered a speech to the band saying that this sound would prove impossible to sell.

"I was asked by the band, 'Would you agree to the A&R man from RCA coming into the studio, sitting next to you and giving you some advice?' It gave me the creeps, but I honoured it.

"The guy said, 'Take that goddamn distortion off Julian's amazing singing voice!' I rolled it back and looked back at Julian, who shook his head: 'No.' When it was back to the sound I'd had, he smiled and said, 'That's the sound.'"

"When we were done, the feeling was that we could have had a little more time. Even two years later, when they were headlining festivals, I'd be in the dressing room and Julian would be in front of the mirror saying, 'I hope we're going to do OK.'"

Room On Fire

Rough Trade, 2003



"After the success of 'Is This It', I stopped into the band's management office. I saw a whiteboard: 'Monday: meetings with Nigel Godrich.' One of the band said, 'Yeah, we're really big fans of the sound on the Radiohead albums.'

"Later that year I got a call from their manager: 'Do you want to work on The Strokes' second album?' During the Godrich session Julian went up to him and said, 'I really like your drum sound, but can we work on the hi-hat sound?' And Godrich looked at Julian and said, 'Julian, a hi-hat is a hi-hat.' He was fired at that moment.

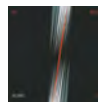
"I got to NYC, they set up and said, 'This is the record we're going to make,' and played. They were monstrously gigantic-sounding compared to the band I met two years earlier. But there was a darker mood: from the lyrics I understood that being away from home for almost two years, partying every night, took its toll.

"A singer will usually sing in the live room while I listen. But Julian wanted to sing sat in a chair next to me. If you listen to the emotional tone, that second album sounds like the weight of the world combined with a broken heart.

"Only later on did Julian confide in me that he was going through difficult times and it wasn't related to his band members."

First Impressions Of Earth

Rough Trade, 2006



"The band hired me to build a recording studio in their practice room. But they had no songs written. They wanted me to be their in-house producer from the demo process.

"Some of the guys were living in different cities, some were married. They're happy to be in the studio, but are they going to put their arms around each other and head across the street for a beer? No, they're going to pack their stuff up, get in their cars and go to their own family.

"But, still, Julian was the leader in that he wrote all the music. He collaborated with JP Bowersock, who they called the 'guru' on the first album. One year into this process, Albert said, 'We met this guy David Kahne, he's working with Sean Lennon, we really like his engineering skills, could he join us and help you?'

"In walks this guy and he immediately tells me his track record, and Paul McCartney calls him on the phone, and then he kind of puts his elbow out and indicates that I'm to go sit on the couch. I stayed a month before I left."

The future

"I reconnected with the band in June [2014] for their New York shows; that was the first time in six years I'd been with all of them at the same time. Whatever had gone on between them, they were happy, enjoying each others' presence.

"I read in NME that there will be a new Strokes album, so I wrote to Julian and said, 'Hello Julian, please put my name in the hat as producer if there's going to be a new Strokes album.' To which he replied, 'I will do that, and I will champion you.'"

NEW YORK CITY PICS

Gordon's previously unseen studio snaps of The Strokes



GR: "Albert said he was gonna grow a beard while we were recording the first album"



Nikolai Fraiture (left) and Fabrizio Moretti "playing chess during a break"



"I was busy recording when this mischief was being done to Nick Valensi"

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**"I have two bands,
two tours, two records
and two babies.
It's full on, and that
doesn't give me any
time to get depressed"**

Back from the brink of self-destruction, Carl Barat is firing on all cylinders. In Soho, he tells Kevin EG Perry about therapy, The Jackals, the "offensive" destruction of London and the new Libertines album

PHOTOS: ANDY FORD

Between greasy bites of cod and gulps of ginger beer in a Soho chip shop, the man Pete Doherty calls 'Biggles' is telling the story of one of his new songs, 'War Of The Roses', in which a desperate drug fiend swaps his mutt for the last available white line.

"No, I've never swapped a dog for cocaine," says Carl Barat drily, "but I have swapped the black dog for coke a few times." That black dog would be the Churchillian metaphor for depression, with which Barat was all too acquainted during his wilderness years. "I've been very lost," he says.

He knows just how close his self-destructive tendencies took him to the edge in the years

between the dissolution of his last band Dirty Pretty Things in 2008 and the return of The Libertines two years later. It was, in fact, just after he and Doherty announced they'd be temporarily patching up their differences at Reading And Leeds Festivals in 2010 that he swung closest to rock bottom.

"I had a pretty heavy lost weekend," he says. "I don't want to repeat that. I felt like I was willing myself to death, but I didn't die. I spent a week taking everything I could get my hands on. I literally didn't sleep. Meth is good for that. I was waiting for my heart to stop. It culminated at Glastonbury – obviously it's easy to stay awake there. On the way home I was such a mess. We stopped at Danny Goffey's

**Carl Barat in
Soho, London,
January 28, 2015**



house and I remember lying on the grass and finally shutting my eyes. After that, everything just fucking changed.”

Barât’s life since then has been one of second chances – both for him and for The Libertines as a band. “That was the moment I’d call my epiphany,” he says. “I realised then that I’d already met the girl who I was gonna be with. I turned my shit around.”

By the end of 2010, The Libertines had belatedly had their first proper taste of playing huge festival shows together (by the time they reached Reading and Leeds’ Main Stage in 2003 and 2004, Doherty was, respectively, in jail and out of the band) and Barât’s girlfriend Edie had given birth to their first son, Eli. Their second son Ramone arrived late last year. These days Barât is writing with Doherty again and has marshalled his new band The Jackals.

He’s back on course to Arcadia, but there are still glimpses of the old black dog. He says he sees a therapist “now and again – I just turn up and rant”, but, at 36, he says it’s his sons who inspire him. “I’ve got beautiful kids and I owe it to them to do something worthwhile. The more I think about mortality, the more I want to do. I’ve got unfinished business, and I could fall down a manhole at any time. I’m more productive now than I’ve ever been. I have two bands, two tours, two records and two babies. It’s full on, and that doesn’t give me any time to get depressed. I still get flickers of it, but on the whole I know where I’m bound now.”

At the moment where he’s bound is on frequent trips to Thailand to see Doherty. He’s just got back and is buzzing with excitement about new songs ‘Belly Of The Beast’, ‘Anthem For Doomed Youth’ and ‘Woke Up Again’, hammering out the tunes on the table with his fingers. He’s thrilled not just to be writing Libertines songs, but also to be rebuilding burnt bridges with Doherty. “It’s been great,” he says. “We got some motorbikes and sped about the place, making new memories. That’s the most important thing. It’s about being on the same page and getting our synergy back up to speed.”

He’ll spend another week out there writing and then a month recording the album, also in Thailand, probably in April. The next job is finding a producer, and Barât wants a Mancunian candidate. “I’m going to email Noel Gallagher. I know he’s really busy, but hopefully he’s got a bit of time for the Libertines who love him so. He’s expressed an interest, and Noel’s Noel, isn’t he? I’d love to work with him. He’s hilarious, but he has such clarity of vision as well. That’s something The Libertines could certainly use.”

From the outside it appears that Doherty has taken to this latest stint at the Hope Rehab Centre with more fervour than any of his previous attempts to get clean. “I take every minute as it comes,” says Barât. “We never told him: ‘You must become teetotal-itarian’. We ➔

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The Jackals: (l-r)
Adam Claxton,
Carl Barât, Jay
Bone, Billy Tessio

said, 'We'll take you as you are.' He's happy and wholesome, as good as ever before."

The band have just announced their first major festival headline slot of the summer, at T In The Park in July. They should have plenty of new material to perform by then, but questions remain: will Doherty need a minder on tour to keep him out of trouble? Will they have to tour dry? "I don't think so," shrugs Barât. "We'll work it out. I'll do whatever he wants, whether that's boozing or not boozing. Well... obviously not heroin."

It comes back to that idea of second chances. For Barât that means the opportunity to deliver on the promise they once looked like frittering away. "We've both had plenty of lost time," he says, by way of understatement. "Now we want to make beautiful things that we're proud of and that stand the test of time. I hope we can do that. To us, we already have. Our old songs stand up as much as they did when we first put them down. If we've got that in us, why rob ourselves of it, let alone anyone else?"

Before his Libertine summer there's the not-so-small matter of 'Let It Reign', his first record with The Jackals. It's scrappier, heavier music than Barât aficionados will be used to – a chance for the old romantic to channel his vitriol into song. He tells me he's been inspired by the apathy he sees around him to kick against the pricks. Especially those responsible for transforming his beloved London into an oligarch's playground.

"I'm disgusted," he says. "To me, it's like seeing a museum smashed up and turned into a McDonald's. It offends my deepest sensibilities. We're losing the Buffalo Bar and Madame JoJo's. I'll do my bit where possible."

He calls the approaching general election "pigs in a sty jostling for food". He's a supporter of Russell Brand's critique of the status quo, and could "acquiesce" to vote Green for lack of a better option. There's a dystopian mood to the record – several songs feature a rag-tag band of revolutionaries railing against an unnamed power – which Barât says draws on Evelyn Waugh, Terry

"I've swapped the black dog for coke a few times"

Carl Barât

Gilliam's *Brazil* and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. He points over my head to where a flashing blue police light outside is illuminating the chip-shop tiles. "I think Big Brother is getting closer and closer. The march of the neo-puritans is upon us."

The video for lead single 'Glory Days' is dedicated to the 306 soldiers who were shot at dawn during World War I for "cowardice" or "desertion". Theirs is a plight that Barât is genuinely moved by. "If I pull you out of your house from your family, put you in a bull ring and tell you to fight a bull, and you don't, so then I shoot you, that's murder. That's state-sanctioned fucking murder."

Barât can trace these preoccupations with glory and patriotism right back to his childhood. He was raised by separated parents: a father who worked in an armaments

factory and a mother who was a member of CND and lived in Teepee Valley, a tented hippy commune in south Wales. "That's my life all over: schizophrenic," says Barât. "It was like parallel lives. A council estate with Victorian strictness on one side, and hippy-dippy lostness on the other side."

Despite the powerful sense of British identity that runs through the record, Barât actually recorded it in Los Angeles during a series of margarita-fuelled sessions with The Bronx's guitarist Joby J Ford. The bulk of the record was laid down there, featuring the likes of Killers violinist Ray Suen and Beastie Boys percussionist Fredo Ortiz. Then they came back to London, where he brought in his newly auditioned Jackals bandmates to finish it.

After our fish supper we wheel away through a cold Soho night to Wardour Street to find them. Barât maintains an office here, a war room of sorts. There are Union Jacks on the walls and a finely detailed map of France. "I apologise," he says, "for the fact it looks like a National Front headquarters."

Barât introduces me to guitarist Billy Tessio, drummer Jay Bone and bassist Adam Claxton, none of whom should be mistaken for mere yes-men. "As much as I respect Carl as a fellow musician, and adore his past work, I don't want to put him on a pedestal," says Tessio. "There's four of us in this band now – let's see what we can do."

They shrug off the idea that the Libertines reunion puts them in an awkward position. "I'm as excited about a new Libertines album as anybody else," says Bone. "This band is an outlet for some of the things Carl wants to do that don't fit The Libertines. We're heavier, with grunge influences and louder guitars."

"What's good about Carl," adds Claxton, "is that he's as hungry and thirsty for it as we are."

That much is clear. Barât has that Libertine glint in his eye once more, and The Jackals have helped chase the black dog from the door. Earlier, he'd told me another Churchill line worth remembering in times of darkness: "If you're going through hell, keep going." ■

New Libertines material

Carl spills the beans on three new songs

'Anthem For Doomed Youth'

"It's beautiful. It isn't finished yet, but we're very excited about it. The trouble is, if you call something 'Anthem For Doomed Youth' it kind of has to be. You're setting yourself up, aren't you? We might have to do a bit of tinkering with it to make sure it is what it says it is. All of our songs are supposed to be anthems for doomed youth."

'Woke Up Again'

"We were bouncing around the studio together on this 72 hours ago. We haven't decided whether this is the final name yet, but we've been calling it 'Woke Up Again' tentatively. It's bouncy, and it's got a big singalong chorus."

'Belly Of The Beast'

"This is one of my favourites of the new songs. It's a beautiful story. It's a song with a real narrative. It's about two parallel lives... probably me and him, you know?"



Reviews

► THE DEFINITIVE VERDICT ■ EDITED BY BEN HOMEWOOD

NME
BOOK



Kim Gordon Girl In A Band

Thurston gets a kicking, but it's the Sonic Youth icon's vivid documentation of US subcultures that impresses



► THE DETAILS

► PUBLISH DATE February 16
► PUBLISHER Dey Street Books

► “What’s it like to be a girl in a band?” That question, repeatedly put to Kim Gordon by male journalists during her time in Sonic Youth, inspired the title of this memoir. But it dwells far less on music than that you might expect.

It isn’t until halfway through the book – which spans all seven decades of the 61-year-old’s life – that Gordon discusses her forays into music. Even then, her first performance comes at an art installation. Instead, she documents America’s shifting subcultures via gritty personal insight. Gordon grew up in hippy-era California, before moving to New York and encountering first punk and later new wave and grunge.

Family life in picture-perfect 1960s Los Angeles was comfortable, and the teenage Gordon developed strong hippy aspirations. But as America was shocked by the Charles Manson murders and the disaster at The Rolling Stones’ Altamont show, scandal rocked Gordon’s family. In the late ’60s, her older brother’s ex-girlfriend was murdered, allegedly by the Manson family. Gordon also writes emotively about the same sibling’s battle with schizophrenia.

Her middle-class background allowed youthful dreams of becoming an artist to flourish. In fact, posing her as a visual artist first and foremost, *Girl In A Band* reveals that music – first in Sonic Youth and then Body/Head – is merely an extension of a deep love of art.

The book is peppered with cameos from art-world figures. In Hollywood, Gordon hangs out with primal-scream-therapy inventor Arthur Janov, works as a framer for art dealer Larry Gagosian and starts

ILLUSTRATION: JIMMY TURRELL

a formative romantic relationship with composer Danny Elfman. Later, she stays with influential photographer Cindy Sherman in Manhattan, meets Raymond Pettibon – who later designed the iconic cover of Sonic Youth's 1990 album 'Goo' – at a Black Flag house show in Hermosa Beach, spots Andy

SONIC BOOM

Three of the book's best takedowns...

Thurston Moore...

"I feel some compassion for Thurston, and I still do. I was sorry for the way he had lost his marriage, his band, his daughter, his family, our life together – and himself. But that is a lot different from forgiveness."

Courtney Love...

"I could tell she was either a borderline personality or had some other kind of crazy, contagious energy, and I try to avoid that kind of drama in my life... You just never knew which direction she would go – but knowing she could turn on me at any moment, I always kept her at arm's length."

Lana Del Rey...

"Lana Del Rey doesn't even know what feminism is... If she really truly believes it's beautiful when young musicians go out on a hot flame of drugs and depression, why doesn't she just off herself?"

Marital strife aside, the Sonic Youth-related half of the book is invaluable for fans, detailing the cultural references in particular songs and the books that inspired them. Tours with Swans in the 1980s and Neil Young and Nirvana in the 1990s are illuminatingly recalled, with depictions of the musicians Gordon knew, rather than any flashy rock-star façades. Elsewhere, time spent co-producing Hole's 1991 debut 'Pretty On The Inside' and the author's issues with Courtney Love – who's branded a narcissist and a sociopath – make for engrossingly juicy material.

Gossip about the breakdown of both her marriage and Sonic Youth will be what draws many to Gordon's book. But she overrides it wonderfully, handling both with resigned simplicity and finding catharsis through the art she cherishes and a performance with an all-female line-up at Nirvana's 2014 induction into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame. So much more than a rock biog, *Girl In A Band* is a unique record of the past 50 years of alternative culture. ■ LEONIE COOPER

9

MORE ALBUMS

Screaming Females Rose Mountain

Don Giovanni



Nearly a decade in, New Jersey punks Screaming

Females have reassessed their modus operandi. They've scrapped their DIY approach and roped in Mastodon producer Matt Bayles, and the results are palpable. Marissa Paternoster's tremulous vibrato is intact, but the trio have diversified from straight-up rock. 'Wishing Well' provides the grandest departure with its 1960s pop bent and singalong chorus, but the title track provides the peak, with Paternoster's indignant vocal melody ("I'm nothing like the others...") echoed by her six-string. The abrasion and urgency of their sound remains, but magnified, as they explore new territory.

■ HAYLEY AVRON

8

The Pop Group Citizen Zombie

Freaks R Us



The Pop Group broke up in 1981, four years after they formed, and in their short life released two albums: 1979's 'Y' and 1980's 'For How Much Longer Do We Tolerate Mass Murder?'. Punk, free jazz and dub collided powerfully on both, so the Bristol band's first record since 2010's reformation deserves an optimistic ear. Sadly, 'Citizen Zombie' is a dud: the sound of meandering jam-band funk neutered by Adele producer Paul Epworth. Band mouthpiece Mark Stewart has noted that there's just as much to rage against now as then, making it a shame that the height of lucidity comes with him quoting the "Choose life..." bit from *Trainspotting* on the electro mess of 'Nations'.

■ NOEL GARDNER

4

Lxury Into The Everywhere

The Croydon producer's tropical beats and jungle loops offer a cerebral retelling of dance history

As Lxury, Croydon producer Andy Smith is injecting the UK dance scene with a certain restless energy. The 24-year-old's burgeoning reputation comes Disclosure-approved – they collaborated on his euphoric 2013 single 'JAWS' – but Lxury's beats are more experimental than the Redhill duo's. On this second EP, he explores old-school jungle and drum'n'bass, most notably on opener 'Pick You Up', on which an echoing soul vocal and pulsating tropical beats recall Manchester bass man Lone. The rest of the record is just as energetic. 'Neighbour' begins as a grimy piano house ballad before building to a glorious peak, and you can practically smell the sweat and dry ice on floorfiller 'Everywhere', which spins drums and clipped vocal samples together impressively. The hook-heavy 'Square 1' features wispy vocals from fellow south Londoner Deptford Goth, marking Lxury's first collaboration with a singer. It's the poppiest moment here, but like the rest of 'Into The Everywhere', demonstrates Lxury's vibrant, intelligent interpretation of dance history. ■ LUCY JONES



8

► THE DETAILS

► RELEASE DATE February 16 ► LABEL Greco-Roman
► PRODUCER Lxury ► LENGTH 26:35 ► TRACKLISTING ►1. Pick You Up ►2. Equals ►3. Square 1 (feat. Deptford Goth) ►4. World 2 ►5. Neighbour ►6. Everywhere ►BEST TRACK Pick You Up

Title Fight

Anti-



The Beach Boys aren't the first band you'd associate

with Title Fight's emo sound, but that's where the cult Pennsylvania group sought inspiration when making this third album. As such, there's more of a pop sheen to 'Hyperview' than its predecessors, 2011's 'Shed' and 2012's 'Floral

Green'. Previously, bassist Ned Russin and guitarist Jamie Rhoden attacked with howling joint vocals; here they're more melodic, emphasising tone rather than volume. It pays off. 'Mrahc' is jangly and melancholic and 'Rose Of Sharon' shimmers with a pretty riff. But it's 'Dizzy' that crowns Title Fight's new approach, wrapping emotion in a low, bass-heavy hum.

■ RHIAN DALY

8

Cheatahs

Sunne EP Witchita



Cheatahs' first two EPs, 'Coared' and 'Sans', pegged them

as Dinosaur Jr enthusiasts. Last year, on their self-titled debut, the London-based quartet blossomed into skilled summoners of mayhem-inducing shoegaze. Full of My Bloody Valentine noise, it was an impressive if unoriginal introduction to the band, who until now have struggled to find a voice of their own. On this new four-track release they unveil a menacing new edge. 'Campus' is a post-punk ripper that sounds like Iceage partying in a morgue, and 'Controller' reins in the fury for a moment of existentialism: "I don't know what's real any more", worries frontman Nathan Hewitt over splashy cymbals. 'Sunne' is a grotty, grubby and exciting refining of Cheatahs' sound. **AL HORNER**

7

Colleen Green

Hardly Art



Sounding extremely 'now' isn't the same as being cutting

edge, as LA indie type Colleen Green's third album demonstrates. A pared-down recording aesthetic, navel-gazing lyrics and a fixation with old pop-punk and getting baked: 'I Want to Grow Up' could have been a breakout hit 20 years ago, yet Green's steez is impeccably millennial, and primed to appeal to folks who've found recent solace in Best Coast or Courtney Barnett. Her songs examine personal insecurity (the title track), romantic glumness ('Deeper Than Love', 'Wild One') and little else. While 'I Want to Grow Up' doesn't exactly break new ground, it compensates by being affecting, relatable and having occasional gnarly solos. **NOEL GARDNER**

7

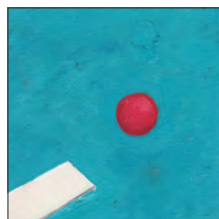
Dutch Uncles

O Shudder

Bookish Manchester band keep their surrealist pop bouncy and airy on album five

Something strange happened to Dutch Uncles after the release of 2013's coming-of-age album 'Out Of Touch In The Wild': they received the patronage of emo-pop powerhouse Paramore, who took them out on a huge European tour and – in theory – introduced them to legions of potential new fans. For a band whose elegant, uplifting pop – think Field Music crossed with Prince – has been cruelly overlooked for far too long, this was definitely the makings of a 'big break'.

So, depending on your standpoint as regards selling out and cashing in, you'll either be baffled or delighted to discover that they've adjusted their modus operandi not one jot on the follow-up, 'O Shudder'. There are no big choruses or emo-friendly sentiments for the Paramore fans. Instead, the Manchester-based quintet draw fresh sculptures from the blueprint created for '...Wild', keeping intact its bouncy, airy feel, intellectual-sounding song titles (hello, 'Upsilon') and lyrics that seem to view human relationships through the lens of



THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** February 23 ► **LABEL** Memphis Industries ► **PRODUCER** Brendan Williams ► **LENGTH** 41:49 ► **TRACKLISTING** ► 1. Babymaking ► 2. Upsilon ► 3. Drips ► 4. Decided Knowledge ► 5. I Should Have Read ► 6. In N Out ► 7. Given Thing ► 8. Don't Sit Back (Frankie Said) ► 9. Accelerate ► 10. Tidal Weight ► 11. Be Right Back ► **BEST TRACK** Upsilon



NME
ALBUM
OF THE WEEK

an anthropologist rather than a participant. Even the sticky subject of sex – presumably the topic of opener 'Babymaking' – inspires the kind of clinically clean, robotically perfect song that could soundtrack an Open University film on fractional distillation.

Theirs is an unusual mix, pinching from XTC's detached social commentary, Tears For Fears' dense instrumentation, Talk Talk's restraint and Tom Tom Club's clever appropriation of funk. There's also strong influence from jazz and math-rock in the shifting time signatures and lunging basslines, and the combined effect is one of pop surrealism – 'Decided Knowledge', has Duncan Wallis answering his bandmates' call of "You've got it" with the response: "A curriculum vitae!"

Given the quality of songwriting and clarity of sound that Dutch Uncles achieve, all of the above is to be admired, in its own way. The difficulty of being in a field of one is that it's easy to go unnoticed; carry on like this and Dutch Uncles risk being the kind of

best-kept-secret that's kept too well by too few. But the hope in them sticking to their guns so firmly is that some of those Paramore fans – and more besides – will hop on board with them on the band's own terms. Why not do the same? **DAN STUBBS**

8

José González

Vestiges & Claws Mute



Before this third album, the last project Gothenburg

musician José González was involved in was 'Master Mix: Red Hot + Arthur Russell', a tribute to the Iowan songwriter – who died in 1992 – that also featured Robyn and Hot Chip. The 36-year-old's affection for Russell heavily informs 'Vestiges & Claws'. The record is

littered with painstakingly layered guitar parts, mellifluous melodies and clapping drumbeats that nod to Russell's posthumous collection 'Love Is Overtaking Me'. 'Leaf Off / The Cave' and 'What Will' are beautifully constructed, and on the latter González's guitar wraps compellingly around a rock-hard rhythm. Closer 'Open Book' is best, though, a perfectly executed example of González' soothing folk. **BEN HOMEWOOD**

8

Dan Deacon

Gliss Riffer Domino



The hard sell on Dan Deacon's new album is that the Baltimore producer-cum-occasional composer has gone back to basics after the brass'n'strings'n'choirs madness of 2012's 'America'. Do not be fooled. There's nothing remotely basic about the way the 33-year-old creates his dense electronica, and even though 'Gliss Riffer' comes

with no added extras, it still creaks under the weight of its experiments. Opener and lead single 'Feel The Lightning' features female-sounding vocals performed by Deacon, 'When I Was Done Dying' resembles some kind of tribal gathering on Pluto and the final three mini-epics – 'Learning To Relax', 'Take It To The Max', 'Steely Blues' – are all six-minute-plus electronic adventures into the fluorescent innards of their creator's mind. **TOM HOWARD**

7

Reviews

Darlia

Petals B-Unique

DARLIA



With this mini-album, Darlia offload six tracks that have been released before and one new one to make way for a debut album proper later this year. Recent single 'I've Never Been To Ohio' is grunge with Radio 1 in the cross hairs, Nathan Day's slurred yowls affected and

insincere. A new version of 'Queens Of Hearts' is polished, thunderous and in brazen pursuit of Royal Blood's coattails, and new song 'Say Your Prayers' strays into epic-rock territory. 'Candyman' is insipid in both its electric and acoustic forms. While the ambition to move past older material is admirable, 'Petals' suggests that Darlia might be running out of ideas. Here's hoping their next release hits a better standard.

■ RHIAN DALY

5

THEESatisfaction

EarthEE Sub Pop



THEESatisfaction have released plenty of music in the three years since their well-received debut, 'awE naturALE', including a mixtape titled 'THEESatisfaction Loves Erykah Badu'. You can hear Badu's influence across 'EarthEE', which flows as freely as its predecessor but is richer and more sonically detailed. Vocally, the Seattle duo bite

harder: "Researching rhymes dictionary, a thesaurus/If it was in your heart you wouldn't have to work hard", raps Stasia Irons on 'Blandland' – a swipe at phonies. Elsewhere they tackle identity ('Post Black, Anyway'), self-awareness ('Universal Perspective') and sex ('Nature's Candy'). It's a quality listen, loosely concerning, as they say on 'No GMO', "The reflective image we find/When the real meets the ill". ■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

8

Idlewild

Everything Ever Written

Empty Words



Until their 2010 demise, Idlewild were manic, stage-licking punk bawlers who gradually turned into Edinburgh's REM and one of the noughties' most refined indie-rock bands. Their reunion might rightfully warrant the reception of at least four Slowdives and a good three-quarters of a Ride, but this comeback album is lad-rock, dad-rock and far more weighed down with paunchy folk, blues and country than their peak period ever allowed for. On 'Come On Ghost' and 'Every Little Means Trust', trad-rock conventions ground singer Roddy Woomble's voice, which once roared sky-bursting melodies. Only 'Nothing That I Can Do About It' and 'Radium Girl' approach the euphoric grandstanding of classics like 'American English' and 'El Capitan'.

Radio 2 beckons. ■ MARK BEAUMONT

5

Songhoy Blues

Music In Exile

Transgressive



Of all the reasons to decide it's time to leave your hometown, armed jihadists banning music is a pretty solid one. That's what forced Mali's Songhoy Blues to move south from Gao to the capital Bamako in 2012. There the quartet met their producers, Africa Express' Marc-Antoine Moreau and Nick Zinner of the Yeah Yeah Yeahs. This resulting debut is a masterpiece of desert blues, blending American guitar licks with Malian groove. 'Soubour' wouldn't sound out of place on a Black Keys record, while the riff in 'Al Hassidi Terei' recalls Fleetwood Mac's 'Oh Well'. Mali is home to the renowned Ali Farka Touré, and his heirs are this righteous four-piece that even militants couldn't silence.

■ KEVIN EG PERRY

8

R&B, dubstep and soul form an uneasy mix on the Bristol producer's second album

Joker

The Mainframe



Bristol's Liam McLean rose to national attention during the dubstep goldrush of 2009, but the man they call Joker wouldn't be forced into anyone's niche. His opulent, melody-stuffed productions owed as much to video-game music and American R&B as they did to the gloomy London bass fraternity, and he even had a name for his music – the evocative but abstract 'purple wow'.

Despite some killer tunes, such as 2008 Rustie collaboration 'Play Doe' and 2009 Hyperdub single 'Digidesign', he's struggled with a full-length, though. His 2010 debut for 4AD, 'The Vision', a guest-packed blend of bass music and loverman soul, fell awkwardly between posts.

'The Mainframe', on Joker's own label Kapsize, suggests he hasn't really learned his lessons. Sure, it has its moments. 'Boss Mode' comes on like climatic

video-game fight music with a bit of ornate thrash-guitar detailing. 'Midnight' is a bass destroyer powered by super-saturated synths that could crack concrete, but swerves cliché by keeping a feminine presence at its core. "I've dreamed of this love for so long..." yearns an unnamed diva in a rare lull from the low-end quake, as McLean lets his fingers dance across silky keys.

However, things come unstuck when Joker swings for romance. 'Lucy' finds Skream collaborator Sam Frank inviting the girl of the title to "get on top". It comes just short of sticky palms, perhaps because Joker's productions are designed to get women in the club, not exclude them; but the effect is cheesy not smooth.

The record's occasional pretensions towards the cinematic also flounder. A mid-album suite split into distinct 'scenes' called things like 'Neon City' and 'Spirit Ruins' mixes up those familiar glowing synths with tropical birdsong and trilling pipes. It's been said that Joker's music is a treat for those with synaesthesia, the medical condition that lets one 'hear' colours. When the shades are coming this diverse, though, you worry it might feel a bit like being assaulted with several cans of silly string.

The final track is a morose thing titled 'Mixed Emotions'. And that rather seems to sum 'The Mainframe' up. ■ LOUIS PATTISON

5

THE DETAILS

►RELEASE DATE February 16 ►LABEL Kapsize ►PRODUCER Joker ►LENGTH 47:52 ►TRACKLISTING ►1. Intro ►2. Boss Mode ►3. Wise Enough ►4. Midnight ►5. An Intervening Episode ►6. Lucy ►7. Scene 1 (Qo,noS) ►8. Scene 2 (Neon City) ►9. Scene 3 (Spirit Ruins) ►10. Mahogany ►11. Love 1 ►12. Fuzz Bop ►13. Mixed Emotions ►BEST TRACK Midnight



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FILM

The comedy North Korea tried to ban has some funny gags but little real bite. So what was all the fuss about?

The Interview

Trailed by chaos since last summer and finally set for a UK release, *The Interview* has already secured its place in cinema history. Its storyline – a plot to assassinate current North Korean leader Kim Jong-un – prompted the country's government to threaten America with "merciless action". Sony Pictures delayed the release, but was soon hacked by a mysterious group called Guardians Of Peace. The resulting chaos saw private emails about some of Hollywood's biggest stars made painfully public. When the same organisation threatened to attack cinemas showing the film, its release was halted altogether.

That's when US president Barack Obama waded in, calling the cancellation "a mistake" and saying, "I wish they'd spoken to me first." So, shortly before Christmas, Sony backtracked and have recouped \$46 million since releasing it online and at selected US cinemas. All of which is quite a lot of fuss over a film that's about as dumb as your average Harold & Kumar movie. Directed by Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg, *The Interview*'s portrayal of the closed-off country is hardly flattering, but the script by former *South Park* writer Dan Sterling isn't nearly as savage as it could have been. For much of the film, Jong-un is depicted almost sympathetically. Played by Randall Park from US sitcom *Veep*, he's a doughy loner with daddy issues whose favourite song is Katy Perry's 'Firework'. The plot follows cheesy TV presenter Dave Skylark (James Franco) and his more grounded producer Aaron Rapoport (Rogen), who

blag an interview with the elusive leader to prove they can handle hard-hitting journalism. In its early stages, the film successfully skewers the vacuous US chat-show circuit with cameos from Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Rob Lowe and Eminem, who unexpectedly says "I'm gay" during an on-air interview. When he is asked how this unlikely revelation ties in with the rapper's allegedly homophobic lyrics, he replies: "Yeah, I've pretty much been leaving a breadcrumb trail of gayness."

The jokes become more hit-and-miss after a CIA agent (*Masters Of Sex* actress Lizzy Caplan) persuades Dave and Aaron to try to murder Jong-un using a dose of poison administered via handshake. A set piece pitting Rogen against a tiger in the grounds of Jong-un's compound is laboured and predictable, but the scenes in which Dave appears to bond with the leader over a day of drinks, spliffs and strippers are filled with funny one-liners. "Dave, do you think margaritas are gay?" a deadpan Jong-un asks Franco's perma-grinning journalist. The heartiest laughs are saved for a final encounter between Dave and the North Korean leader, which takes place on air in what appears a send-up of the interviews between David Frost and Richard Nixon dramatised in 2008's *Frost/Nixon*.

The Interview's satire doesn't bite hard enough to justify the controversy, and it's too bloated to be a comedy classic. But its crude humour and playful performances should satisfy those wanting to discover what the fuss is about. ■ NICK LEVINE



DIRECTORS
Seth Rogen and
Evan Goldberg
IN CINEMAS
February 6

CINEMA

Love Is Strange



This New York-set film from writer-director Ira Sachs offers a modest but affecting tale of love conquering adversity. When painter Ben (John Lithgow) and music teacher George (Alfred Molina) marry after 39 years together, George's Catholic school employers fire him, forcing the couple to relinquish the Manhattan apartment they can no longer afford. While they hunt for a cheaper property, Ben bunks in Brooklyn with his nephew's family and proceeds to test their patience with his constant conversation. George moves in with some younger friends whose party lifestyle leaves him isolated. *Love Is Strange* initially seems slight, but thanks to nuanced performances and a sharp script, it builds into a sweet film about the frailty of human relationships.

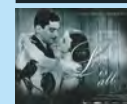
■ NICK LEVINE

8

47

CINEMA

Love Is All



Not so much a documentary as a 70-minute

montage, Kim Longinotto's film looks at the portrayal of love and relationships as seen through the lenses of British cinematographers. From the archives of the British Film Institute, Longinotto has crafted an expressionistic survey of how society's views of relationships have altered, and how our renowned diffidence has been consistently challenged. She also asks questions about racism, homophobia, voyeurism and where we draw lines between celebrating emotions and keeping them private, which make these often decades-old snapshots feel oddly current. The story is told largely through the soundtrack, chosen by Richard Hawley from his entirely apposite back catalogue.

■ ANGUS BATEY

7

CINEMA

Jupiter Ascending



The *Matrix* creators, Lana and Andy Wachowski, follow up their 2012 adaptation of David Mitchell's book *Cloud Atlas* with another sprawling sci-fi epic. Jupiter (Mila Kunis) works cleaning Chicago toilets until Caine (Channing Tatum, sporting Spock ears) turns up on his anti-gravity skates and tells her she's the reincarnation

of the queen of the universe. Amid a mash-up of almost every spacefaring franchise you can think of, Eddie Redmayne whispers his cartoon baddie lines and Douglas Booth plays the same kind of oily cad he portrayed in *The Riot Club*. It's fun in an old-fashioned, spaceships-the-size-of-continents kind of way, but if there's an original idea to be found here it must have snuck in while no-one was looking.

■ ANGUS BATEY

5

CINEMA

Coherence



Director James Ward Byrkit – who co-wrote 2011's Johnny Depp-starring *Rango* – shot this low-budget sci-fi film in his living room over five days. It follows eight friends as they gather for a dinner party where tensions are already high – dancer Em (Swedish actress Emily Foxler) is on edge at her boyfriend's ex being invited. But that soon

proves the least of her worries, as this bizarre story is kickstarted by a passing comet, which reveals a confusing mass of parallel dimensions. We see versions of the characters gathered in similar houses experiencing similar situations. *Coherence*'s multiple-reality concept is interesting, but its labyrinthine plot and unengaging improvised nature make it too much of a headache to enjoy. ■ RHIAN DALY

6

NME
GIG
OF THE WEEK



Chilli Jesson
and co onstage
in Scunthorpe

ALL THE GIGS
ON THE BEAT
THE TIT
MEAT
FIRE BY
DUNKER IS
JONNY PAUL
GEMIN

Palma Violets

**The Lincoln Imp,
Scunthorpe**

Friday, January 30

**The Londoners give a rowdy
taste of album two as their tiny
comeback turns into a pile-up**

PHOTO BY ANDY FORD

▶ The Lincoln Imp is hosting Palma Violets' first UK gig since Reading And Leeds Festivals last summer, and doesn't know what's hit it. In its tiny back room, fans bounce around from the moment opener 'Rattlesnake Highway' kicks in. But the three new and unheard tunes excite most. Judging by the furious, Clash-indebted 'On The Beach', the meandering, Pulp-esque 'Matador' and the punky 'Danger In The Club', the quartet's upcoming second album will be rowdier than 2013 debut '180'. "We're gonna tone it down," says bassist Chilli Jesson, his green shirt drenched in sweat. But no breather is forthcoming. Instead, they tear into a cacophonous 'Best Of Friends' and everyone rushes towards the burly men guarding the front of the stage. No amount of muscle can stop Palma Violets or their fans tonight, though, and the gig ends in a delirious pile-up. ■ RHIAN DALY

Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds

The Dome, London
Monday, February 2

The venue is tiny but the tunes
are massive at Noel's hot-ticket
warm-up show in north London

Come in, Oasis, your hiatus is up. You've had your allotted five years, the mathematically optimal period of time to break up for. At five years the anticipation reaches peak pitch, the cheques get acceptably huge and the average band can expect to be roughly 7.4 times bigger than when they split. Now Liam's at a loose end, there are anniversaries aplenty and Michael Eavis is chomping at the bit, so roll on up, Oasis, it's cash-in time.

Um, Oasis?

Noel Gallagher is thinking no such thing. Before an audience of 400 – half guestlist, half very lucky ballot winners – he saunters happily onto the Dome's tiny stage for a special High Flying Birds warm-up gig ahead of March's arena tour. He cracks a joke about how Tufnell Park, the area of north London we're in, "sounds like a fuckin' kids' animated series – let's see if the Psychedelic Squirrel turns up or something", and piles into a set significantly lighter on his old band's songs than his latest outings.

Just as the reunion klaxon is primed to go off, he's releasing a second solo album, 'Chasing Yesterday', and making extensive live plans that have little place for 'Wonderwall'. Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds is looking less and less like a throwaway solo stopgap, an excuse to play select Oasis tunes around the festival circuit for a short gardening leave, and more like an actual long-term proposition. It's as if the 47-year-old is determined to win rock's grand prix all over again, but this time without any surly passengers trying to wrench the car off the track at every curve.

He's got a long way to go before he can boast Oasis' catalogue of culture-twattling mega-hits, of course, but he and his grizzled gang of session musos, ex-Zutons and '90s survivors – more Noel Gallagher's Hard Touring Blokes, really – already have a formidable canon in the

making. If he opens with 'Whatever' B-side '(It's Good) To Be Free', as he did when touring his self-titled 2011 debut, it's just to get the crowd's singalong valves cleared before the serious action of 'AKA... What A Life!', 'Everybody's On The Run' and 'The Death Of You And Me', the glorious New Orleans funeral parade that stands as his best song since, ooh, at least 'Lyla'.

These are urgent chunks of doomy Americana laced with the odd bit of UK pop history (that really is a plinky rave piano making 'AKA... What A Life!' sound like a spy movie parachute sequence), and that's where the High Flying Birds excel. It's a sad fact of rock-star psychology that

any major figure going solo immediately 'gets' roots music, and you'd expect that of Noel more than anyone, but to his credit he tackles it with a far younger man's intrigue.

So the trad glam stomp of '(Stranded On) The Wrong Beach', part of Noel's ongoing Ridiculous And Unnecessary Use Of Brackets series, comes wrapped in spacey synthesizer and wailing one-note guitar solos. New tracks 'In The Heat Of The Moment' and 'Riverman' ("Do not be alarmed," Noel warns before the latter, "there is a saxophone coming onstage") infuse bar-room rock and Southern blues, respectively, with Charlatans swirls of sound and distinctly Britpopian choruses. If some of the second album songs premiered, notably 'Lock All The Doors' and 'The Dying Of The Light', settle back into the well-constructed stadium-rock plod that characterised mid-period Oasis, they do it from behind a faintly psychedelic gauze, vaguely resembling Knebworth on a gallon of hardcore cough syrup.

Hell, even Noel's lyrics sound cool drenched in US dark-canyon vibes:

SETLIST

- (It's Good) To Be Free
- (Stranded On) The Wrong Beach
- In The Heat Of The Moment
- Riverman
- Dream On
- Lock All The Doors
- The Dying Of The Light
- Fade Away
- The Death Of You And Me
- AKA... What A Life!
- If I Had A Gun...
- Diggy's Dinner
- Ballad Of The Mighty I
- Don't Look Back In Anger





Noel Gallagher onstage in Tufnell Park

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Baylee, 19, Stoke-on-Trent
"Absolutely brilliant, he's

a legend. 'Don't Look Back In Anger' at the end was the best bit."



Will, 19, Stoke-on-Trent
"We were told that he was just doing the new album, so it was a surprise to hear Oasis songs and stuff off the old album."



Lee, 25, London
"It was blinding. It was so good I can't explain it."



Billy, 24, London
"That geezer's my idol. I grew up with Oasis, I love everything the geezer's ever done and to be stood three yards away from him, it doesn't get much better than that."

"Find me the girl that electrifies the storm", he demands on 'Riverman'. However, nothing can save the deathless couplet "If I had a gun/I'd shoot a hole into the sun" from the stomping 'If I Had A Gun...'

The crowd-pleaser in him can't avoid knocking out a slew of acoustic-based Oasis covers towards the end. 'Fade Away', 'Diggy's Dinner' and 'Don't Look Back In Anger' speak of brighter, lighter times and spark roar-alongs from a crowd, including one Gem Archer loitering at the back. With Noel telling *NME* pre-gig that he'd offer to chuck Liam a song or two for a solo album, there's a growing air of goodwill around the Oasis camp, further fuel to the reunion fire. But please, while Noel's shining once more, just hold off a couple more years. ■ MARK BEAUMONT

8

MORE GIGS

Meat Wave Sticky Mike's Frog Bar, Brighton

Monday, January 26
"We've never even played Canada before," Meat Wave bassist Joe Gac admits during the Chicago punks' first show outside America. But gigs on home soil have clearly helped the quartet to hone their fierce sound. On record they're grungy, but the band that piles into crunching opener '15 Years' are as clean and sharp as a boxfresh sushi knife. The slamming 'Sham King' and 'Brother', the title track from their recent EP, help win over a curious crowd, guitarist Chris Sutter's yell of "You're just another motherfucker's brother" ringing around the venue. They close with the post-punk muscle of 'Sunlight', and with the crowd shaking the stage barriers, Meat Wave's British introduction is a triumph.

■ STUART HUGGETT

7

Natalie Prass The Lexington, London

Tuesday, January 27
A reverent hush has settled over The Lexington tonight. A day after the release of her self-titled debut, Nashville newcomer Natalie Prass is commanding respect usually reserved for more established artists. The silence allows her lush, heartbroken country-soul to shine. The gossamer 'Christy' is enhanced by a string quartet, 'Why Don't You Believe In Me' collapses into fuzzed-up guitars and Prass' electric piano brings a soulful flow to 'Your Fool'. She's got other tricks, too. "This is gonna get real steamy," she promises before sliding into an impeccable cover of Janet Jackson's 'Any Time, Any Place', displaying impressive versatility.

■ MATTHEW HORTON

8

The Districts/Yak



NME AWARDS SHOWS
2015 *with Austin*
— THE MUSIC CAPITAL OF THE WORLD —

100 Club, London

Tuesday, February 3

Mosh pits and trashed instruments get the NME Awards Shows off to a chaotic start

Yak are hell-bent on destruction. Opening for The Districts, the London trio's set is on the brink of collapse from the moment they tear into opener 'Intro'. They deliver the first 20 minutes – a sequence of rattling psych jams that includes the heavy 'GMRK' and debut single 'Hungry Heart' – without stopping. As wide-eyed frontman Oli Burslem plays his organ by sitting on it and repeatedly stumbles into the audience, drummer Elliot Rawson and bassist Andy Jones maintain tight, hypnotic rhythms.

SETLIST

- ▶ Peaches
- ▶ Hounds
- ▶ Rocking Chair
- ▶ Long Distance
- ▶ Heavy Begg
- ▶ Suburban Smell
- ▶ Bold
- ▶ Chlorine
- ▶ Funeral Beds
- ▶ 4th And Roebling
- ▶ Young Blood

Two songs before the end, it all unravels. During the unhinged noise of 'Smile', Oli bounces up and down on his organ and then shoves it into the audience. Not satisfied with the crash it makes as it tips to the floor, he follows it offstage to upend it completely. 'Plastic People' concludes with him clattering into the drumkit, dismantling half of it and pinning Elliot to the floor.

It's a hard act for The Districts to follow. The Pennsylvanian teens give it their best shot – through powerful songs rather than destructive hi-jinks. Openers 'Peaches' and 'Hounds' bristle with emotion, and frontman Rob Grote's cries on the lush 'Suburban Smell' are compelling. Fans topple onto the stage during garagey single '4th And Roebling', before an intense, swirling version of 'Young Blood' brings things to a lively conclusion, with Rob thrashing in a heap on the floor. They might leave with their instruments fully intact, but The Districts do destructive in a different way, attacking the heart rather than inanimate objects. ■ RHIAN DALY

8

Reviews LIVE

A confident Elly Jackson closes a rollercoaster six months with a fierce performance



La Roux

Koko, London
Tuesday, February 3

“Who remembers 2009?” La Roux’s Elly Jackson asks a sold-out Koko in Camden before launching into her breakthrough hit, ‘In For The Kill’. Judging by the pandemonium the song causes, everyone does, and there might even be a few fans who were here at Koko that same year, witnessing a very different Jackson at the start of her career. Eyes closed, head down, death grip on the microphone stand, she was a picture of uncertainty – a pop star in the making, already armed with a slew of killer songs, but one still fearful of performing live. Six years later, she couldn’t be more different: backed by a superb, immaculately dressed four-piece band, she dances, engages with fans, plays guitar on two songs and whacks giant electronic pads on an extended version of ‘Silent Partner’ from last year’s second album, ‘Trouble In Paradise’.

‘Silent Partner’, written about the acute anxiety Jackson experienced while touring her debut album, is played last in the main set, before a two-song encore that finishes with her 2009 Number One hit, ‘Bulletproof’. As the house lights come up, the band are confronted with the sight of 1,400-odd fans going bat-shit crazy, not just on the floor, but up high on Koko’s many balconies and levels. A spotlight catches Jackson square in the face, revealing joy, fear and surprise in equal measure. She also looks shattered and there’s the strong sense tonight – her last show for a while – of a chapter ending in Jackson’s life, before a well-deserved break, during which time she’ll finally come to terms with all that’s happened since ‘Trouble In Paradise’ was released last July.



It’s been a rollercoaster ride – highs and lows brought on by an album that was a critical hit but a commercial flop (by La Roux’s standards) and led to Jackson beefing with her label. Her parting words are, “Thank you, everyone who supported ‘Trouble In Paradise’, it means a lot to me,” the implication being that her fanbase is still split in two: those who joined the party with ‘Quicksand’, ‘In For The Kill’ and ‘Bulletproof’ – her terrific first three singles – and those who stayed with her for ‘Trouble In Paradise’.

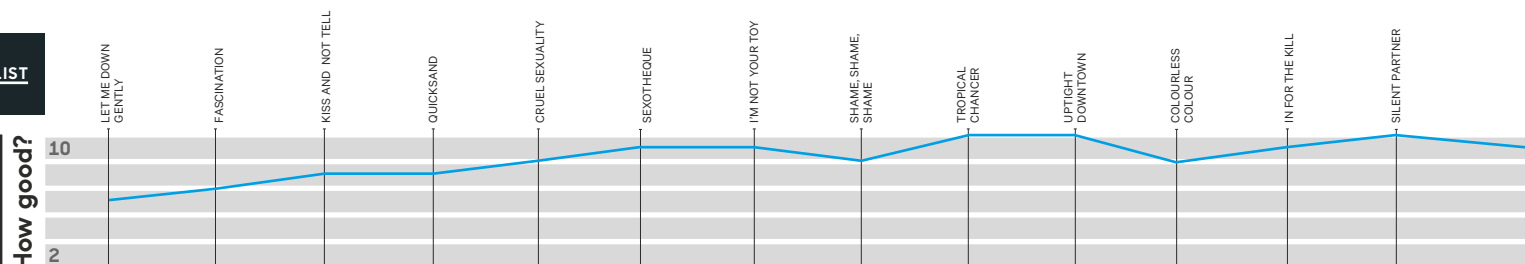
Rearranged for Jackson’s impressive quartet, ‘In For The Kill’ sounds immense, but no better or worse than material from ‘Trouble In Paradise’, which makes up the majority of the set. The band begins inconspicuously with ‘Let Me Down Gently’, before easing into older song ‘Fascination’ and ‘Kiss And Not Tell’ from ‘Trouble In Paradise’. Mid-set, they perform a cover of a Shirley & Company’s ‘Shame, Shame, Shame’ – a proto-disco track that Jackson says the band are “united” in loving – then launch into a magnificent one-two of ‘Tropical

Chancer’ and ‘Uptight Downtown’, the latter played far thicker and heavier than it is on the album.

By ‘Tigerlily’ – the first song of the encore – Jackson’s voice is shot, the band knackered. How different this show feels to the much smaller gig La Roux put on at London’s Conway Hall last July. Then, at the birth of ‘Trouble In Paradise’, they were less well oiled but fresher. Tonight, road weariness has set in like muscle cramp, but there’s never a moment when the band don’t play with punch. It’s a fascinating, fierce show ending what has been a typically lively few months for one of Britain’s most intriguing pop acts. “She’s like a sexy, cool Tilda Swinton,” NME overhears one fan say afterwards, “everything about her feels unnatural, but she makes a virtue of it.” Get some sleep, Elly. We can’t wait to find out what happens next. ■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE



SETLIST



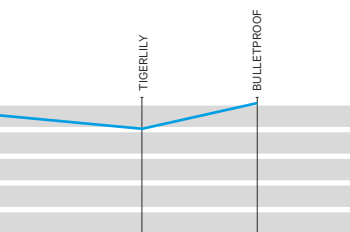
DEREK BRENNER, PA



La Roux's Elly Jackson performs at Koko, London



ELLY DANCES, PLAYS GUITAR AND WHACKS ELECTRONIC DRUM PADS



MORE GIGS

Naomi Punk The Prince Albert, Brighton

Monday, February 2
With just two guitars and a drumkit, Naomi Punk nail their coiling riffs into the Prince Albert audience's ears at oppressive volume. It's the Olympia, Washington trio's first visit to the UK and softly spoken frontman Travis Coster is pleased to be here. "C'mon up close, everybody," he offers before they open with the crashing slog of 'Rodeo Trash Pit'. As the set unfolds, it's clear that, unlike their Olympia DIY scene contemporaries like Milk Music and Broken Water, Naomi Punk operate with total disregard for distortion. Iron-strength tracks like 'Song Factory' and 'Television Man' wrap around Coster's tensely spat vocals, crafting tunes that are punk in attitude, not design.

STUART HUGGETT

7

White Fence Kraak Gallery, Manchester

Wednesday, January 28
"We are White Fence: The Musical!" announces Californian multi-instrumentalist Tim Presley. But as the Ty Segall collaborator and one-time member of The Fall starts up 'Chairs In The Dark', it's quickly obvious that the only theatrics on show tonight will be of the six-stringed variety. The band rattle through a lengthy set of West Coast garage and acid-flecked '60s riffs. Moments of greatness, like the squealing solos he trades with touring guitarist Cate Le Bon, are tempered by passages where hooks and Presley's mumbled vocals get lost in the squall. But by the time of 'Paranoid Bait's closing surge, all is forgiven.

GARY RYAN

7

Kasabian



The Garage, London Thursday, January 29

Tom and Serge radiate lairy bravado at their smallest gig in 12 years

Kasabian's first show of 2015 couldn't have come at a better time. Just after Serge Pizzorno reacted to his band's failure to pick up a Brit Awards nomination by berating the ceremony for "shutting rock'n'roll out", the hard-touring Leicester four-piece are in London for their smallest gig since laying siege to High Wycombe's White Horse pub back in 2003. Where better to show the judges just what they're missing?

SETLIST

- Bumblebeee
- Eez-Eh
- Underdog
- Where Did All The Love Go?
- Days Are Forgotten
- Cutt Off
- Bow
- Rewired
- Word Up
- Treat
- Empire
- Stevie
- Vlad The Impaler
- Fire

Meighan leers afterwards. 'Eez-Eh', the juggernaut lead single from '48:13', bounces into 'Underdog' and a buoyant 'Where Did All The Love Go?'. At the end of 'Days Are Forgotten's fervent singalong, Meighan, bounding across the stage looking spick and span in a smart dark overcoat,

booms, "You're making history right now – this gig is being recorded for TV and the internet!"

The chorus on 'Cutt Off', now more than a decade old, still sounds as pregnant with combustible energy as it did in 2004. At its climax, Meighan darts offstage, leaving Pizzorno bopping around with a set of maracas. The guitarist then begins an interlude of solo cabaret that takes in a cover of Cameo's 1986 hit 'Word Up' and two tracks from the last album: a euphoric 'Bow' and 'Treat', during which he launches himself into the crowd to sing, "Everybody knows, I work it, work it like a treat".

The final four tunes hammer home the sheer power of Kasabian's well-oiled live show. 'Empire' and 'Stevie' radiate lairy confidence, but 'Vlad The Impaler' just erupts, Meighan's sneered vocals only just audible over blasting guitar and drums. Pints zig-zag overhead as the burlier punters down the front barge each other into a mosh pit. 'Fire' is wilder still, and Meighan shares a sweet moment with a man who, sat on his friend's shoulders, bellows the lyrics back in the frontman's face.

After last year's Glastonbury headline appearance and those mammoth arena gigs, Kasabian seem almost constrained by The Garage's intimacy. Perhaps that's just as well. Back in December, Pizzorno hinted to *NME* that stadium shows were on the horizon. Tonight's partisan crowd suggests they'll have no trouble filling them.

NADIA KHOMAMI

8

53

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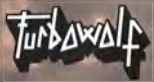
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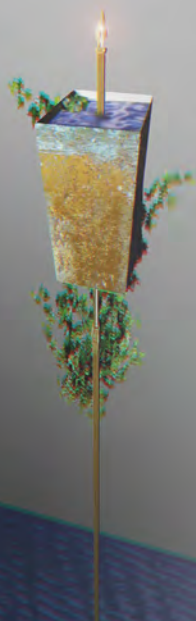
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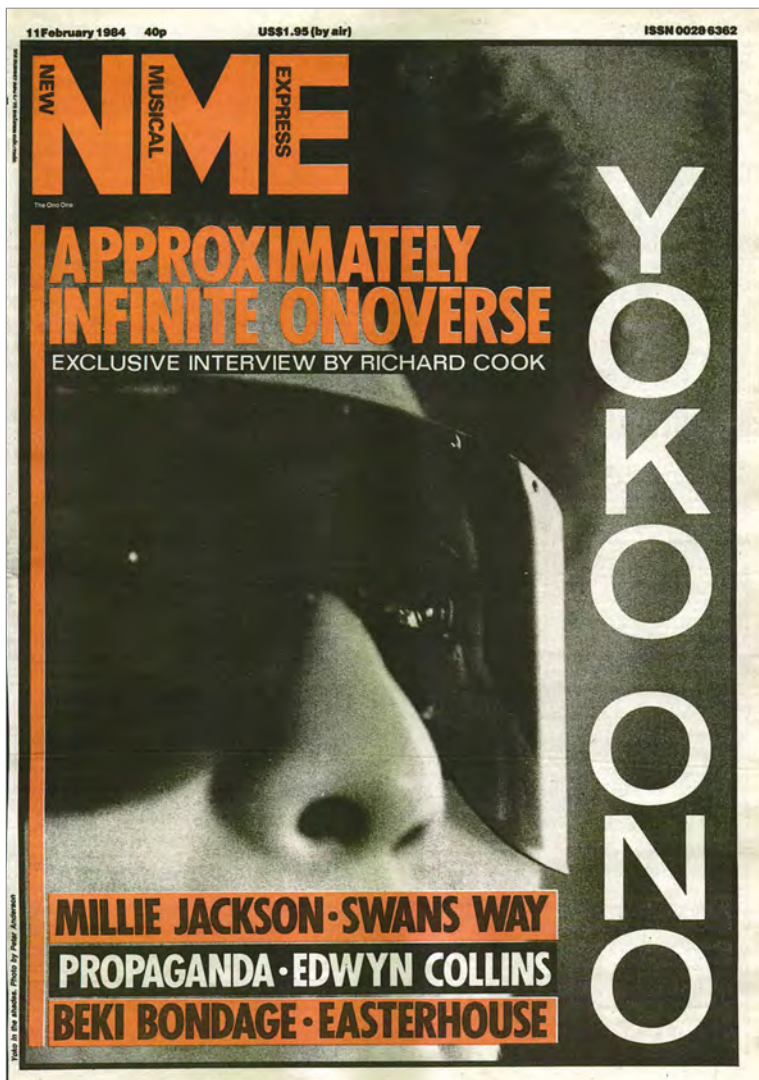
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RICHARD JOHNSON, JORDAN CURTIS HUGHES, DANNY PAYNE

THIS WEEK IN 1984



Yoko alone

The avant-garde artist tells *NME* about going through “an excruciatingly painful process” after John Lennon’s murder

Four years after her husband John Lennon was murdered on the streets of New York, Yoko Ono meets *NME*’s Richard Cook on the eve of the release of ‘Milk And Honey’, John and Yoko’s follow-up to ‘Double Fantasy’ that had been shelved for several years following his death. Understandably, the record is overshadowed by grief, and Yoko talks frankly about the tragedy.

“I couldn’t bear facing Sean for a week or so,” she admits. “Sean was very much a part of John and they were very much buddy-buddies, and I could hardly bear to see him. It was an excruciatingly painful process. He’d be looking at me and it was, ‘Well, it’s me and you now.’”

Surprisingly, Yoko’s love for John seems to have transferred to his fans in his absence: “I feel a warm feeling towards them because we went through the same loss, I suppose.”

BITTER ORANGE

A year on from Orange Juice’s chart breakthrough with ‘Rip It Up’, singer Edwyn Collins tells *NME*’s Mat Snow how pleased he is that the band’s mainstream success appears to have been short-lived. “Orange Juice could’ve been huge now... like U2, but U2 equals Led Zeppelin now. So I’m glad we didn’t make it.” And on Moz’s lot? “The Smiths are good, but I much prefer [our] ‘Simply Thrilled Honey’ to ‘This Charming Man’ when it comes to 12-string Byrds pastiches!”

PERSONALITY BREAKDOWN

The idea of zany post-punks the Television Personalities bringing out ‘A Sense Of Belonging’, a single tackling nuclear paranoia and CND, has their label up in arms (as it were). “When I used to suggest to Rough Trade that we were a serious group and played proper music, they used to phone the asylum,” says guitarist Joe Foster.

REVIEWED THIS WEEK



Simple Minds
– Sparkle In
The Rain

“What is

disturbing is that they appear to have fallen under the unfortunate delusion that they actually are U2.”

■ DON WATSON

ALSO IN THE ISSUE THIS WEEK

► Julie Burchill gives The Style Council’s ‘My Ever Changing Moods’ a mild kicking in the singles page, describing it as “the sound of someone who has assimilated the Brothers Isley into his bloodstream”.

► *NME* legend Steven Wells is reviewed performing his rant poetry under his Seething Wells moniker. “Vote Seething Wells next election,” writes reviewer Lindsay Shapero.

► Across the page, The Smiths’ show at Sheffield University is reviewed. “The Smiths are just bland and unsensational enough for Morrissey to shine,” reports Amrik Rai.

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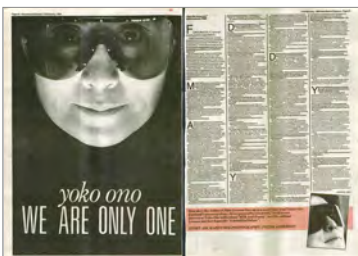
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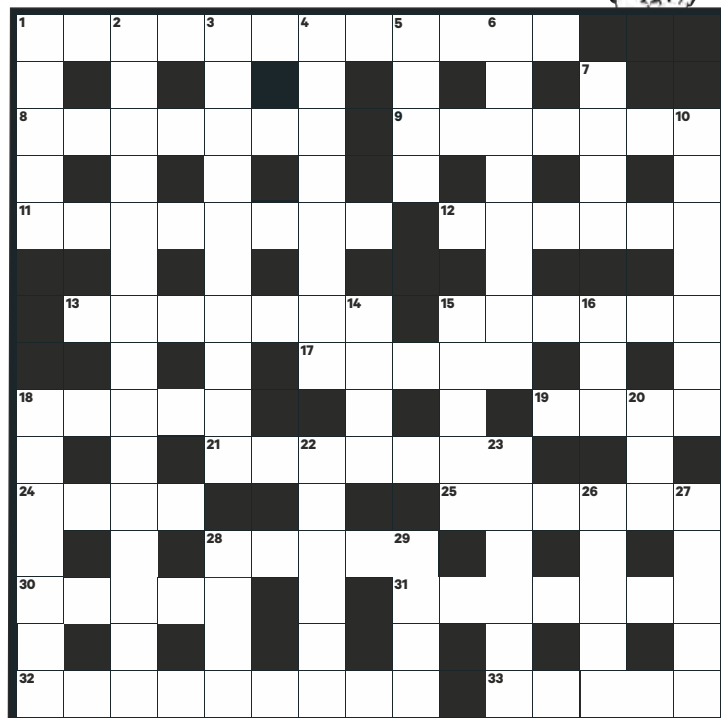


CROSSWORD

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CLUES ACROSS

- 1** Education, education, education... I'm dropping off... War!!!! (7-5)
8 Make a release of James Bay's new single (3-2-2)
9 "I'm so happy, 'cos today I found my friends", 1992 (7)
11 Keane end arrangement made with '60s pop star (4-4)
12 (See 17 across)
13 "Brain fried tonight through misuse, through misuse, through misuse", 2006 (7)
15 Crewed a strange setting for Whale (2-4)
17+12A Composer of music in *Dr Dee: An English Opera* (5-6)
18 Make an immediate move for early R&B-style Moody Blues (2-3)
19 So it somehow became a hit for Kanye West and Jay Z (4)
21 The Faces sounding a bit French on this album (3-2-2)
24 At that moment in time

- The Charlatans started playing (4)
25 "What became of the likely lads/What became of the _____ we had", The Libertines (6)
28 (See 7 down)
30 Man from The Loft gets in the last orders (5)
31 Gary Numan involved in a turnabout landing (7)
32+15D Oldest work they get rewritten for Richard Ashcroft (4-2-3-5)
33 (See 22 down)

CLUES DOWN

- 1+29D** It was wrong to rely on Laura Marling (5-4)
2 Last year's uncharted single from an easily deflated La Roux (3-2-4-6)
3 Marvin Gaye needed Kim Weston and Rod Stewart needed Tina Turner to perform this number (2-5-3)
4 Confined to the house as punishment with My Vitriol (8)
5 Uncivilised music from Beach House (4)

- 6** Thank Lee for turning out with Catfish & The Bottlemen (8)
7+28A The broken aching rib of girl in The Raincoats (4-5)
10 (See 23 down)
14 'Emergency Third _____ Power Trip', album by The Rain Parade (4)
15 (See 32 across)
16+28D Band fronted by Eddie Argos (3-4)
18 "All the girls around her say she's got it coming", 1968 (3-4)
20 Terrible aim of this music by Nas (1-2)
22+33A Debut single from Doves. Should be with you soon (4-2-5)
23+10D Mercury Prize winners in 2006 with their debut album (6-7)
26 Welshmen who blasted out with '68 Guns' (5)
27 'Shot By Both _____', Magazine or 'Both _____ Now', Judy Collins (5)
28 (See 16 down)
29 (See 1 down)

JANUARY 31 ANSWERS

ACROSS 1 Come Home Baby, 9 On Leaving, 10+13D Other Voices, 11 Fossils, 12 Darlia, 14 Rock In Rio, 19 Goat, 20 Dancehall, 23+32A Iko Iko, 25 Tender, 26 Strut, 30+2D I Can See For Miles, 31 Info, 33 Go-Go's, 35 Nice
DOWN 1+16A Cool For Cats, 3 Hear It Is, 4 Mainstream, 5+6D Big Brovaz, 7 Cholla, 8 Dreams, 15+24D Chain Gang Of Love, 17 Talk, 18 Cher, 19+34A Getting Even, 21 Lit, 22 Senses, 27 Turin, 28 Union, 29 Kele

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